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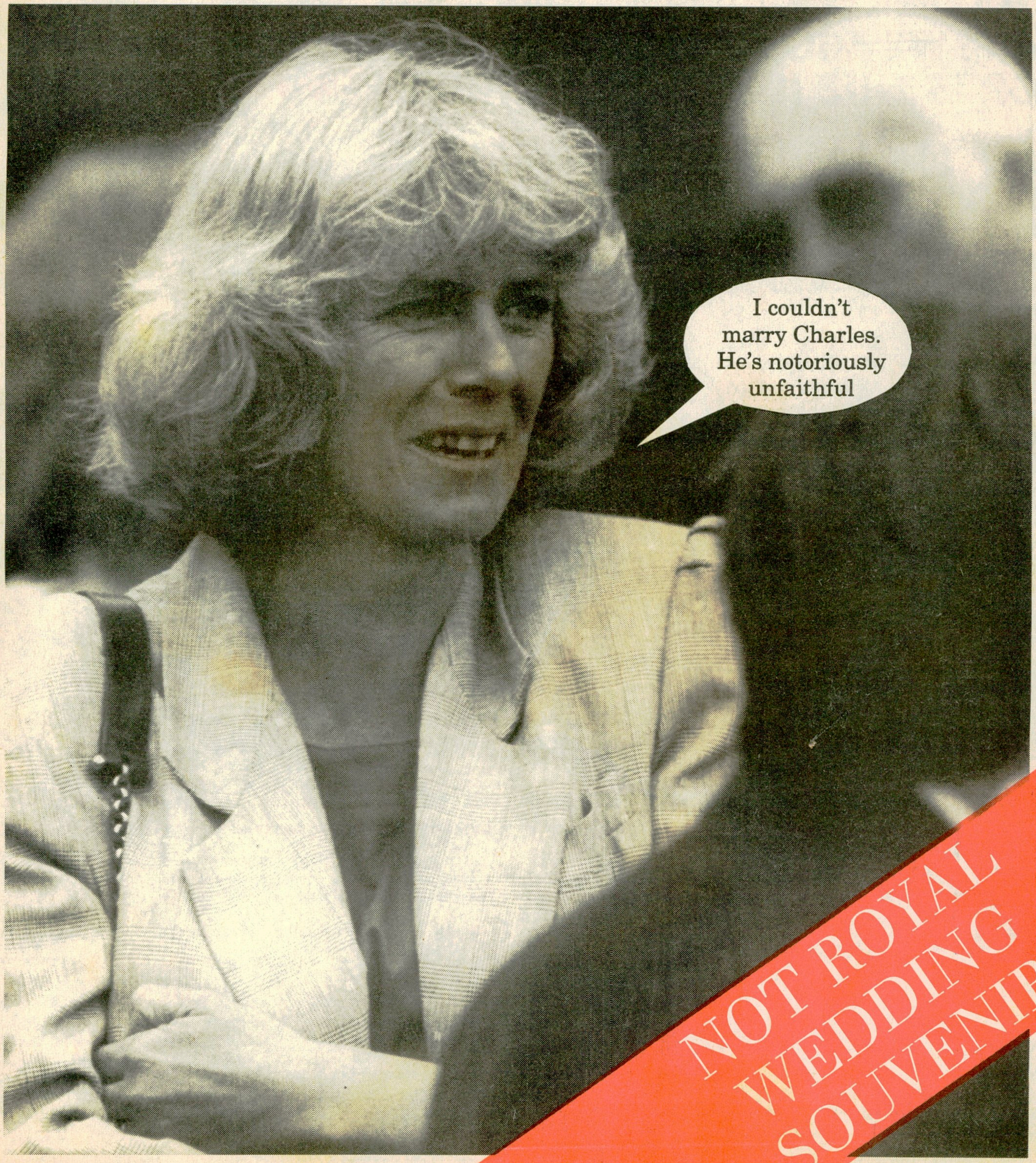

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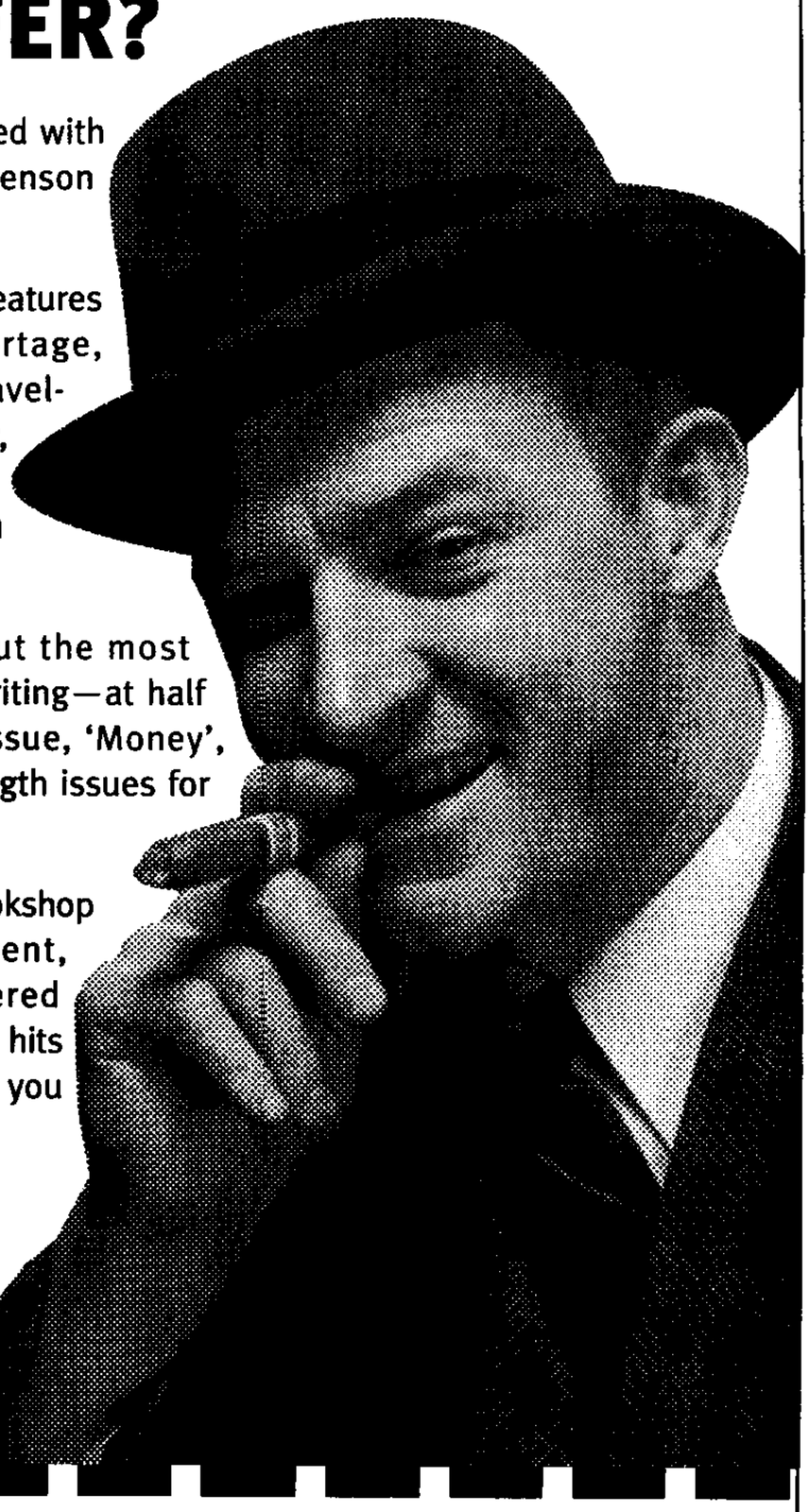

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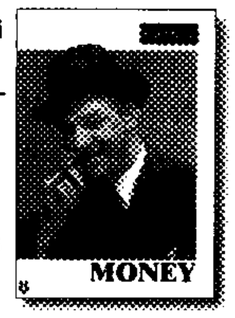

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Gnome

MY NEWSPAPERS have long been calling for the Labour Party to drop its archaic and obsolete commitment to the so-called Clause Four of its constitution.

For years editorials in my papers have told the Labour Party that it was Clause Four that was denying them popular support and Clause Four that ensured the continuance of a Conservative government.

It was therefore something of a surprise to see that Mr Tony Blair has decided to drop Clause Four and is sticking to this decision despite criticism from inside his party.

I am delighted to say that my newspapers responded to this change in the political landscape with suitable generosity.

TWO-FACED BLAIR DITCHES OLD PRINCIPLES said the *Daily Gnome*. WHY DOESN'T OPPORTUNIST BLAIR BELIEVE IN ANYTHING ANY MORE? asked the *Gnome on Sunday*. VOTE CONSERVATIVE said the *Sunday Gnome*, perhaps encapsulating this complex argument most deftly of all.

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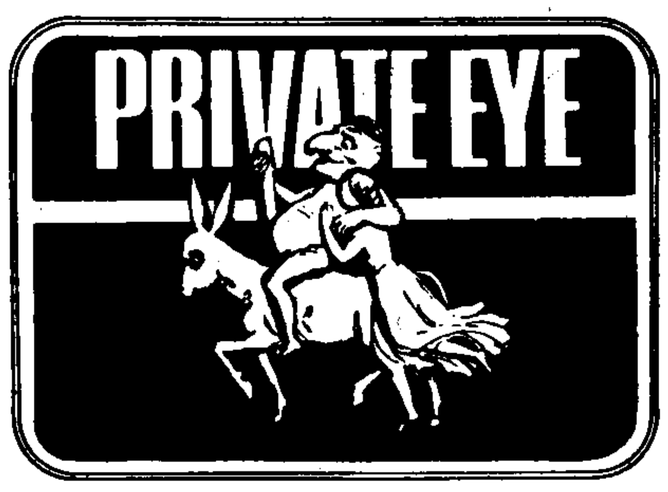


COLOUR SECTION

THE Nolan committee on standards in public life includes just one academic — Professor Anthony King of Essex university, who himself supplements his publicly-funded salary with handsome fees for moonlighting at the BBC and the *Daily Telegraph*.

His expertise will certainly be invaluable to the committee. Two years ago King received more than £100,000 of taxpayers' money from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to finance a study of the constitutional role of the prime minister. Now he has informed the ESRC that it can expect nothing in return: he has decided not to write the study after all. So can it have its money back? Er, no: he has spent the lot.

WHILE the Nolan "sleaze" committee sits it's the job of the Tory whips, especially the handsome junior whip Andrew Mackay, to make sure backbenchers don't get involved in any mischief.

To stiffen his resolve, Mr Mackay no doubt whispers to himself the magic word Cabra.

Cabra Estates was a property developer which made fortunes for its directors in the late 1980s boom. Its board was joined in 1989 by a young Tory backbencher called Andrew MacKay. So brilliant was he — and so prodigious were his connections in the City (he was parliamentary consultant to the merchant bank Morgan Grenfell) — that the company chairman John F. Duggan could declare in triumph: "We now have the personnel in place which could take us through this current difficult property market."

One project to help them through was a massive plan to develop the centre of Bracknell, Berkshire, which is represented in parliament by the member for East Berks, Andrew MacKay.

In the year MacKay joined the board, Cabra made a profit of £3.6 million. The following year it made a loss of £11.2 million. In May 1993 it collapsed into embarrassing receivership with more than £70 million debts. The "development" of Bracknell, to the delight of the town's inhabitants, if not its MP, never saw the light of day.

WHY is serial bungler Michael Howard sitting on Judge Stephen Tumim's report on Blakenhurst prison? The north Worcester jail is one of only three private prisons in the UK, so a right-wing Tory home secretary should surely be keen to publicise its virtues.

The jail, run by UK Detention Services, which is largely a cover for the notorious Corrections Corporation of America, had been plagued by riots, escapes and allegations that bullying, drugs and weapons were rife. The claims were borne out by the very high number of Blakenhurst prisoners appearing in court with severe facial injuries.

Tumim generally publishes his reports within four months and the one on Blakenhurst was planned for last September... until Howard got hold of it. First it was delayed until Christmas — but publication then of course would have coincided with Tumim's devastating report into the escape of IRA prisoners from Whitemoor in Cambridgeshire. Now the report has been delayed indefinitely, though there are vague noises that it might come out next month.

Why is Howard so coy about what he has proclaimed as a Tory success story? The *Eye* has obtained a list of the confidential report's findings and they make devastating reading.

Tumim accuses Blakenhurst of security so lax that drugs and weapons, far from reducing, are a staple part of the prison's economy. He accuses UKDS of failing to control prisoners and of breaking many of the contractual promises that won it its contract in the first place. Blakenhurst, he adds, is downright "depressing" and has shown none of the innovation Howard and his predecessors said was the basis for private prisons.

No wonder Howard wants to keep it under wraps.

THE Confederation of British Industry (CBI) trumpeted the brave abstinence of Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman of Marks & Spencer, who is to chair the CBI group investigating the high pay and perks of British bosses.

Sir Richard, boasted the CBI, actually *slashed* his bonus last year by a fantastic £66,970 — clear proof that not everyone in the British boardroom is a greedy pig. The CBI made rather less of Sir Richard's basic pay rise of £34,968 — from just £594,620 a year to a slightly better £629,588 — and nor did it shout much about the rise from £85,000 to £90,250 in the company's annual contribution to what will shortly be Sir Richard's humungous pension.

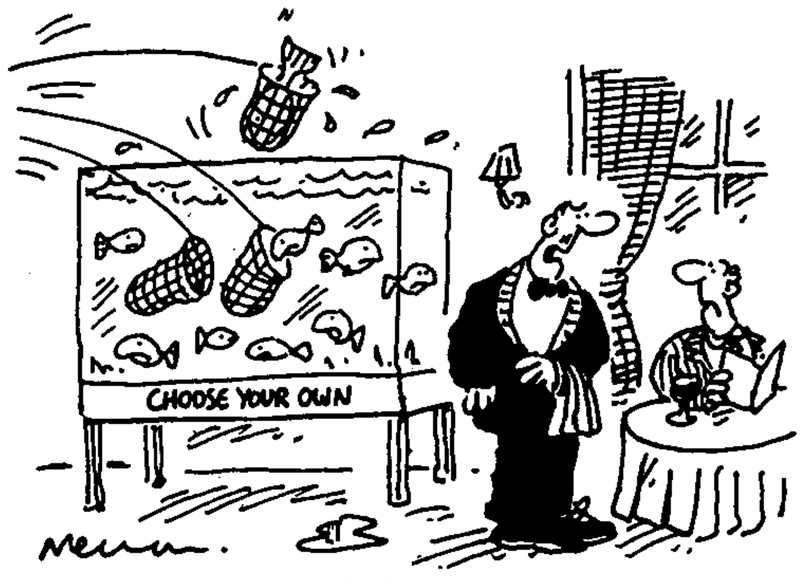
Greenbury's CBI group is expected to be "tough" on the way the newly-privatised utility monpolies have rewarded their bosses. But he should be careful about the history of this process. The most notorious offender is British Gas, which as soon as it was privatised in 1986 started dishing out enormous pay increases and share options to its directors. This was all decided by British Gas board's compensation committee, one of whose most ambitious members at the time — the year after privatisation — was none other than Richard Greenbury.

YORKSHIRE Water — the water company with a terrible record for polluting waterways, as measured in fines imposed by magistrates — has a new string to its bow: contaminating land.

Its subsidiary, Yorkshire Environmental Ltd, has been fined £6,000 and ordered to pay £1,900 costs for allowing 10 tonnes of hospital waste to lie around for days on end at a sewage works in Leeds.

Green liquid was seen seeping from the unguarded bags of human tissues, operating theatre waste and research dishes used for growing germ cultures. Under terms of the contract between the company and local hospitals, the hospital waste should have been immediately incinerated. But Yorkshire Environmental's two incinerators had both broken down, so the waste was dumped at the sewage works — hence the conviction for storing clinical waste at an unlicensed site.

PS: There will be no problem paying the fine: half-year profits to September 1994 were £67 million.



"It's that bloody Spanish restaurant down the road"

Street of Shame

THE DAY after the revolting *News of the Screws* printed royal valet Ken Stronach's claims that Prince Charles had romped in a cabbage patch with Camilla Parker Bowles, Irish radio presenter Myles Dungan received a strange telephone call.

A sadly misinformed researcher had decided that *Daily Mail* "superstar" Nigel Pratt-Dumpster would be able to help sate the public's desire for information on this vital issue. Assuming the guise of a well-connected, somewhat world-weary observer, Dumpster dismissed the *Screws* story out of hand, claiming that Charles was at it all the time. "I've seen him myself," he boasted.

"You've seen Prince Charles have sex?" asked the incredulous radio man.

"Yes," replied Pratt.

"Er, how?" asked the doubting Dungan.

Pratt-Dumpster then explained that (while Diana was otherwise engaged) he had kept the prince's Bentley under close surveillance in a car park as Charles had sex with a young blonde.

Naturally Dumpster felt unable to name the woman concerned, although he did say she is married with two children and that the assignation occurred after "Bunter's wedding" at which both he and Charles were guests. The desperate diarist then enthralled the Irish nation by describing how he had to struggle to watch Charles copulate due to the restricted view provided by the Bentley's rear window.

"Much as I know Charles, much as I care for him, shall we say this is not unusual behaviour," he commented to the obviously bemused presenter. Surely such exciting information belongs not on the radio but in print: after all, *Daily Mail* readers would be impressed to learn that their diarist spends his time trying to see through steamy windows.

THERE were scenes of hysterical joy at the *Daily Mail* after the *Sun* "scoop" that Andrew and Camilla Parker Bowles were to divorce. The *Mail*'s own Nigel Dempster had of course thundered over and over again that the absurd Parkyour Ballses would *never* contemplate such a move.

"How's Nigel going to get out of this one?" howled Paul Dacre, the paper's normally dour editor, weeping with pleasure. The answer came in a shameless full-page feature by Pratt Dumpster himself, which began: "It has taken a long time for Andrew Parker Bowles to face up to the fact that there was no future left with Camilla after almost 30 years together."

These poignant words could almost be the dire diarist's own obituary at the *Mail*...

THE question of devolution is a complicated one — especially for Murdoch editors trying to flog papers in Scotland.

Before the last election Rupert Murdoch personally authorised the Glasgow edition of the *Sun* to adopt a pro-independence line, designed primarily to attract nationalists from Mirror Group's pro-devolution, Labour-supporting *Daily Record*.

Meanwhile the Wapping *Sun* has continued to defend the union in the face of Tony Blair's vague plan for an assembly. A recent leader proclaimed that "we live in the United Kingdom, governed by Westminster" and demanded that this continue, warning against Labour's plans for "more waste, more bureaucracy — just remember the capital's old assembly, the GLC." This message was *not* in the rag's Scottish edition.

GOOD to see loyalty is still alive and well at the *Grauniad*.

Veteran hack Richard Boston has announced that he is writing a book about his lately-departed colleague Richard Gott. It's title? *The Useful Idiot.*

THE *Grauniad*'s bleating about equality rings hollow given the unequal way it treats its own staff.

Judith Cook had been writing for the social workers' Bible for 25 years as a west country reporter and later feature writer. When she wrote about the sacked Plymouth nurse Sister Cooksley, her piece was given a prime slot in *Guardian Weekend*.

However, two days after the magazine had gone to press the hospital trust announced that the nurse was to be reinstated — all a bit embarrassing for the *Guardian*, which had to publish an explanatory note.

Cook's troubles really began when the hospital trust's PR woman told the *Guardian*'s health correspondent David Brindle that the decision to reinstate the nurse was made *before* Cook's article went to press — and that Cook had been told of the decision some days before.

A frosty *Guardian*, believing the PR rather than its own contributor, wrote to Judith Cook telling her it would no longer commission her work. She had, it was claimed, deliberately allowed a feature to run knowing the affair had been settled. All her protests to Peter Preston et al fell on aurally-challenged ears.

Of course had Cook concealed a long-running relationship with the KGB from her editor and then applauded Pol Pot, the *Guardian*'s liberals might still be as chummy with her as they are with the disgraced Richard Gott.

SINISTER David "Rommel" Montgomery, chief executive of Mirror Group, is forever boasting that his regime is untainted by the pension-pilfering Maxwell past. This will come as a surprise to seasoned *Mirror* sub-editor Crawford McAfee.

McAfee was one of the few experienced journalists not to have been purged by the malevolent Montgomery. Indeed McAfee, 51, was recently voted to the position of hacks' trustee on the anorexic pension fund.

However, that Friday night the group managing editor (a Maxwell appointee, natch), Charlie "Gorbals" Wilson, called McAfee up to the plush ninth floor executive suites, put an affectionate arm round his fellow Glaswegian and uttered the ominous salutation: "Welcome aboard, Crafwie!"

On the Monday McAfee was sacked.

SACKINGS and victimization continue at the ailing rag, causing ever more cock-ups to appear in print.

The *Mirror*'s recent pitiful front page splash on Hugh Grant called him the star of *Three Weddings and A Funeral*. The innumerate oaf "editing" that day, who accidentally lost one wedding, was legendary deputy editor Brendon "Chucky" Parsons.

New improved Private I-I-I!

THIS WEEK'S rundown of the nation's most self-obsessed columnists, based on the number of incidences of the word "I" per column-inch).

		Ego Rating
1	Michael Winner (Sunday Times 15/1)	2.06
2	Zoë Heller (Independent on Sunday 15/1)	1.94
3	Bernard Levin (Times 20/1)	1.83
4	C.J. Stone (Guardian, 14/1)	1.80
5	Angela Lambert (Independent 18/1)	1.79
6	Justine Picardie (IoS 22/1)	1.42
7	Geraldine Bedell (IoS 22/1)	1.29
8	Michael Winner (News of the World 15/1)	1.23
9	Ruth Dudley Edwards (Independent 14/1)	1.22
10	Tony Blair (Mail on Sunday 15/1)	1.07

Bubblin' under: Anne Robinson, William Donaldson, Judi Bevan, Jonathan Woss.

(Thanks to B. Douglas)

The moronic Parsons ("What's Glynbourne [*sic*]?!") gained his nickname during the Bulger trial when he ordered the paper's education correspondent to show the notorious "Chucky" video to a class of primary school children to test their reactions.

But Chucky's finest moment came during last summer's outbreak of bubonic plague in India when he suggested filching rubbish bags from Air India flights and testing their contents for black death microbes.

NEPOTISM stalks the offices of the *Indescribablypious* at Canary Wharf.

The paper's pre-Christmas features pages included an article by ever-so busy Angela Lambert on the hidden depths of spirituality maintained by children.

Her main sources were "two noted theologians"; and one, Carolyn Butler, described how she had collected material for a radio programme on spirituality partly from her own children.

What the article did not say was that Carolyn Butler is in fact the daughter of, er, Angela Lambert; which presumably makes her spiritual children Angela's grandchildren.

Mum also managed a plug for Carolyn's radio programme, details of which were printed at the end of the piece.

THE LATEST *Vanity Fair* carries a characteristically macho diary by Christopher Hitchens purportedly written over a period of four months.

Modestly titled "Mother Teresa and Me", Hitchens compares himself to Claud Cockburn and boasts how he was singlehandedly involved in the making of the recent Channel Four film debunking Mother Teresa.

Vanity Fair fact-checkers need a rap on the knuckles:

- The idea for the film came not from Hitchens but from Dr Aroup Chatterji, a Bengali doctor married to an Irish Catholic, who first approached Bandung, the producer.
- Hitchens spent a total of four days on the film, not four months. He was not present during the edit, which took place when he was back in Washington.
- The bulk of the work, as the credits show, was not done by Hitchens or his "mate" Tariq Ali, but by associate producer Vania Del Borgo, who built on Hitchen's research and by the director of the film, Jenny Morgan. Neither woman rates even a mention in the great journalist's "diary".

The mystery is why Hitchens, who had already generated reams of publicity, felt it necessary to blow his own trumpet so noisily. One trusts rumours of a forthcoming Hitchens "book" on Mother Teresa are without foundation.

THAT enchanting redhead and TV personality Anne Robinson certainly has a point of view! In her column in *Today* newspaper she gave an amusing description of a famous jape by the late, saintly Peter Cook.

Deep in litigation with fat tyrant Robert Maxwell, Cook achieved illicit entry to the *Daily Mirror* by sending up a crate of hooch to the executive in charge of a top secret project, a spoof edition of *Private Eye*. Cook then proceeded to ring Maxwell in New York on his own telephone. "Hilariously," wrote Anne, "*Mirror* journalists were too immobilised from the whisky Cook had cunningly sent ahead of his arrival to do anything useful to assist their boss."

Anne omits one tiny fact. The hack concerned was the buffoon John Penrose, aka Mr Anne Robinson, her husband.

RESIDENTS of Greater Manchester are still reeling in shock and disbelief following the recent arrival of raddled hackette Chrissy Iley as a star columnist on the *Manchester Evening News*.

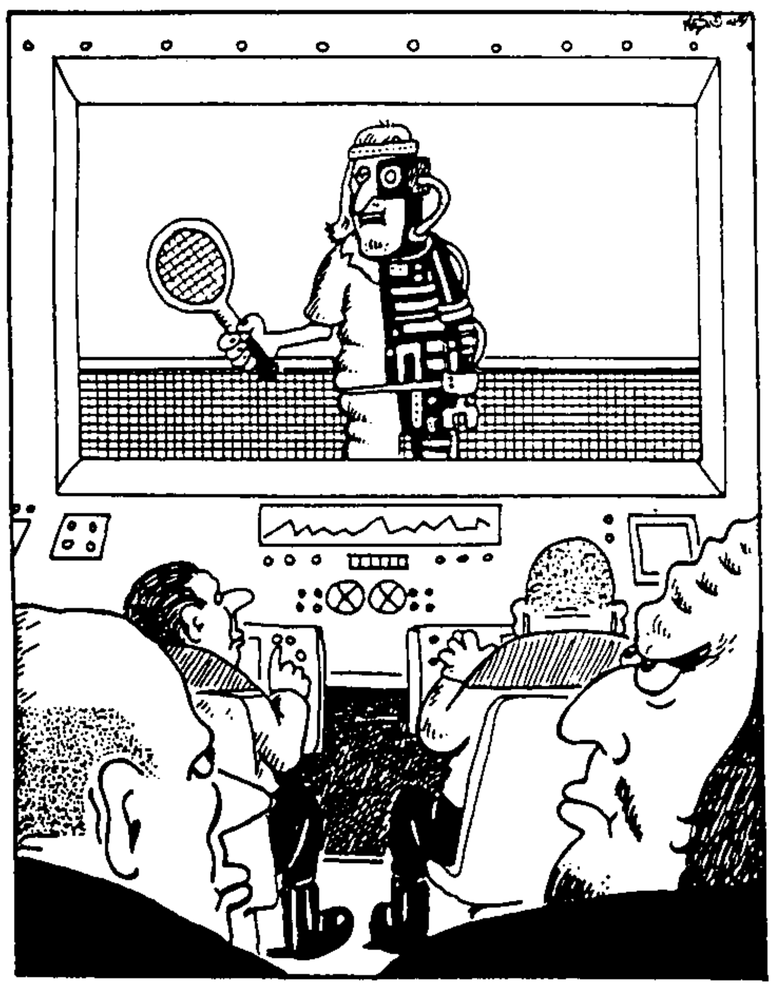
On 13 January, she began her column by slagging (or, rather, Glenda Slagging) off Peter Cook. "A friend of mine did the last interview with him before he died," she revealed. "In the middle of the interview when he recalled his mother who had recently died he reduced himself to a puddle of big dollopy tears." This, she believed, proved that he "wasn't really living".

Having thus despatched Cook, Iley aimed a few kicks at another corpse — that of Roy Castle, who died of cancer last year. "I found it offensive, his big bald chemotherapy head everywhere," she sneered. Anyway, Castle's death was all his own fault: "Just as I believe people get ill because they want to or need to, people often die because they want to."

Warming to her theme, Iley explained that "Women who have been betrayed and have somehow ended up in abusive or unrequited sexual relationships get womb cancer. People who are anal retentives get colon cancer. People who don't know how to live get lung cancer... Women who have a deprived sense of nurturing get breast cancer."

Needless to say, the *MEN* office has been deluged with protests. In last Tuesday's paper, half the letters' page was filled with complaints about the new columnist — "vicious", "disgusting", "unbelievably offensive", "hideous", "deeply untalented and immature". Some readers, arguing that the live export of Fleet Street hackettes to Manchester is "inhumane", are now starting a campaign to ban this cruel trade altogether.

STAR TREK '94



"Oh no, Captain. It's a Bjornborg..."

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! *TO Sloane Square for tea and buggery — plus rape, cannibalism, coprophilia and the rest, with delightful Sarah Kane, author of the Royal Court's controversial play, Blasted.*

Sarah talks about her work — "this disgusting feast of filth", as Jack Tinker describes it in the Daily Mail — and tells the Marquesa it is about an angry tabloid hack who is holed up in a hotel room with a nymphet.

How Sarah has developed such an extreme world view remains a mystery. But perhaps a clue is given by the identity of her father: one Peter Kane, the Daily Mirror's own Essex district reporter. Kane senior is a pure Essex man, apparently, who likes to boast to colleagues that he is "far to the right of Genghis Khan".

HALLO! POLITE society is a-quiver with excitement at next month's high court action brought by the Princess of Wales against Mirror Group Newspapers and gym owner Bryce Taylor, who had the shocking *lèse majesté* to photograph HRH in her leotard.

Defence counsel Geoff Robertson QC is certainly looking forward to his cross-examination of the princess. It is rumoured that he also intends to subpoena many of her friends with a view to establishing how averse she really is to invasions of her privacy.

This may explain why her former lover, "Major" James Hewitt, has recently been staying at Robertson's Islington home: one feels sure nothing but professional duty could induce the dapper QC to allow such a bounder across his threshold — especially since Hewitt's manners are still as appalling as ever.

Asked by Robertson's wife, the delightful novelist Kathy Lette, what Princess Di was really like, the cad replied: "She's got bad breath — and she wants sex all the time."

HALLO! *CAMILLA Parker Bowles has not only lost a husband. She has lost a lot of money, too.*

The Prince of Wales's mistress is not just a "body", she is a "name"; and like so many of her county set, she became a member of Lloyd's of London.

She signed up in 1979 and became deeply involved during the disaster years, her main problem stemming from her membership of the rancid Janson Green 1145 syndicate.

Her losses here will total at least £150,000, although the full damage will be closer to a quarter of a million pounds. Any chance of Charles doing the decent thing and coughing up?

HALLO! TO highlight Camilla as an adulteress, husband Andrew has been portrayed as a patriotic officer loyally laying down his wife for his country.

The truth, of course, is the complete opposite. Despite being the Queen's silver stick-in-waiting, Andrew's... er... stick never did much waiting. The brigadier started putting it about a bit early on but while Camilla devoted her attentions to Charles, Andrew rogered for Britain.

CHARLES: NEW SHOCK

HALLO! ACCLAIM, at last, for the selfless Duchess of York! On her recent coast-to-coast US freebie (*Shurely "charity" trip? Ed.*) the Virginia-based Helicopter Association International awarded Fergie its exciting and prestigious Salute to Excellence Award.

HAI President Frank L. Janson announced: "The duchess certainly deserves this recognition for her outstanding success in educating children in a positive yet unobtrusive manner through the colourful *Budgie the Little Helicopter* books which tell youngsters about the benefits which helicopters bring to society."

As for Fergie, who crossed the States in free limos and private jets to launch Chances For Children, she has (most unkindly) been rechristened by cynical Yanks as "Freebies for Fergie".

OVERHEARD on BBC2's *Decisions*:

DAVID COOK: And what did your partner say when you told him that you were coming out about your homosexuality?

RABBI LIONEL BLUE: He said "I'm right behind you, Lionel".

HALLO! IMRAN KHAN, the suave Pakistani cricketer, has changed his spots. To the alarm of Benazir Bhutto he has become a darling of the Islamic fundamentalists, attacking "depraved" western values and sexual mores.

Imran rarely speaks English nowadays, and has swopped designer jeans and cowboy boots for baggy pyjama-trousers, knee-length shirts and thick tyre-soled sandals. At rallies across Pakistan he is cheered by right-wing Muslims for his attacks on the decadence of the country's ruling elite, and is widely touted as a future prime minister.

Clearly this moral crusader is no relation to the Imran Khan who surreptitiously used a bottle-top to tamper with cricket balls when he was playing in England. Nor is the Imran Khan who now argues that women should dress "modestly" the same one who spent so many years escorting mini-skirted lovelies in London — including Susannah Constantine, Emma Sergeant, Marie Helvin, Stephanie Beacham, Goldie Hawn etc etc. Indeed, less than two years ago it was revealed about *that* Imran Khan that another of his glam girlfriends, MTV presenter Kristiane Backer, had actually moved into his London flat.

Happily the real Imran Khan is made of more moral stuff, however, and he has decided that a proper wife might be useful asset. At a recent rally in Pakistan, the adoring crowd shouted at him "Marry, marry, marry!" "OK," he agreed, "I will." They then chanted: "Who will you marry?" "Whoever you want me to," he obligingly replied. He has promised that by the end of this year he will wed "a simple Pakistani girl" in an arranged marriage.

Thus a politician is born.

'The Marquesa'

IN THE TEAROOM

THE earnest young men at Conservative central office who write the briefings Tory ministers and backbenchers are supposed to parrot off in media interviews are stuck for anything new or clever to say. This month's offering has been:

- Labour would sign-up for anything in Europe — including a single currency.
- The union (as in devolution, not Europe) is a good thing; regional assemblies are bad.
- Labour would put taxes up.
- Er, that's it.

Those MPs with long political memories have noticed that these incantations were precisely the ones prepared for the election campaign in 1992 and thus ought still to be in mothballs awaiting the next campaign in 1996 or 1997. "There's no point rehearsing all these matters 18 months ahead of time," said the Tearoom sage. "It just gives the opposition a chance to hone their replies. Unless..."

The unspoken and unmentionable fear is that John Major, having clumsily careered into every political obstacle in his path so far might now be blundering towards the biggest pratfall of them all: a premature general election.

This is, after all, a minority government whose survival depends on the goodwill of a group of ultra-sensitive Orangemen, and their noses are twitching anxiously at the smell of whatever the British and Irish governments have been cooking up for Ulster's future. What's more the Grim Reaper is due to visit Westminster, and though there is no telling for whom the last division bell may toll, given Major's luck it is bound to be one of his stalwarts.

'Urquhart'

DURING his stay at the Welsh office rightwing "bastard" John Redwood is proving just how green he isn't.

It is nearly a year since John Gummer, environment secretary, introduced Planning and Policy Guidance 13 (PPG13). These rules discriminate against out-of-town shop and leisure developments because they cause too much extra traffic, but Mr Redwood has yet to introduce them in Wales.

He has never stated the reason the guidance shouldn't apply to Welsh planning authorities just as it does to English ones, and now he even seems to be considering whether any form of PPG13 is needed in Wales at all.

The department of transport has changed its rules so councils applying for grants for new or upgraded roads have to include an element of investment in public transport. Again the governor-general, as he is known in Wales, has decided this "package approach" shouldn't apply to Wales, leaving local councils free to continue ignoring public transport while investing millions in new roads.

This year the department of the environment and the ministry of agriculture are jointly preparing a rural white paper assessing how the countryside can be assured a sustainable future. A parallel exercise is being conducted by the Scottish office, but — even though most of Wales is rural — Mr Redwood won't allow the Welsh office to prepare a rural white paper or even to contribute to the English one.

Having shown this much concern for environmental initiatives in less than 12 months, the clever money says Redwood will be environment secretary in the next reshuffle.

ALL is not as it should be at the London offices of Decision Makers Ltd, the political lobbying company from which Tory party vice-chairman Angela Rumbold resigned as director.

Not only has Dame Angela been embarrassed again — this time by the revelation that her researcher and former constituency agent was working for Decision Makers without her knowledge — but the lobbyists have found themselves the subject of a neighbourhood dispute.

Neighbours in Gladstone Street have complained to Southwark council over the company's alleged flouting of planning laws by carrying out a business in a residential London street only to have their complaints conveniently ignored.

A brass plaque on the front of the Victorian Grade II listed building tells callers they are at Premier House, the registered office of Decision Makers. The £235,000 three-storey house in SE1 lies just across the river from Westminster in the West Square conservation area. It was bought by Maureen Thomison and David Sanford (they run the company) five years ago, and neighbours say they turned it into offices while they moved out to live in Dolphin Square.

The wining and dining of MPs and clients generates the sort of traffic residents could do without: double parked chauffeur driven limousines, taxis and motorcycle messengers.

Decision Makers was instrumental in getting a redundant site in north Kent, owned by its client Blue Circle, earmarked as a key depot for the Channel tunnel rail link. It also worked on behalf of Southwark council to keep rail link sites out of the borough.

An inquiry to Southwark council's press office as to why no action has been taken against the company was not returned, and the company continues to pay residential community charge.

IAN Greer Associates, the parliamentary lobby firm, is losing its shine.

Last autumn it was revealed that Ian Greer had been engaged by computer consultants CSC to canvass support in the firm's bid for a massive department of social security "outsourcing" contract (*Eyes passim*). But CSC got cold feet about the resulting publicity, and severed its links with Greer.

In fact CSC needn't have bothered to recruit Greer in the first place: the cabinet office says CSC is already Whitehall's most favoured computer consultancy.

MANY of the woes of the Student Loans Company (SLC) can be traced to computer problems dating back some years.

The EDS computer consultancy, founded by Ross Perot, won the SLC contract from the department of education (then prop: Kenneth Clarke) in 1991. Clarke's friend and loans company chairman Malcolm Hurston then failed to tell Whitehall about software problems which led to cock-ups with registering and collecting loans.

Hurston was later obliged to resign after admitting receiving hospitality from EDS including a paid trip to Paris which Hurston claimed gave him "an opportunity to size up EDS" — at the France-Scotland rugby international.

FACT: Last year EDS was the beneficiary of a handsome £1 billion contract with the Inland Revenue (prop: Kenneth Clarke).

TONY BLAIR will hear no opposition in his determination to have no policy at all on private education.

Derek Fatchett, a Labour defence spokesman, was savagely carpeted by Blair last week after attacking the £113 million boarding school allowances paid to armed forces families.

Fatchett elicited the figure from armed forces minister Nicholas "Fatty" Soames, who admitted the state paid out this £113.6 million to pay for the private education of 12,500 children of armed forces personnel.

Fatchett condemned this as "unacceptable", and no sooner had Blair read the quote in the *Guardian* than he hauled the MP into his office and told him in no uncertain terms to shut up.

THE retired colonels and discreet bachelors of the Woking Conservative Association who on 19 January selected Humfrey Malins to succeed Sir Cranley Onslow as their MP clearly didn't do too much homework.

For it was "Motormouth" Malins, then MP for Croydon North West, who touchingly explained to housing magazine *Roof* in December 1991 that: "If people have borrowed more on a mortgage than they ought to, they're going to have to bloody well learn!"

Strangely, when this moving expression of sympathy for the repossessed was repeated by constituency newspapers prior to the general election, local ingrates responded by kicking Malins out with the largest anti-Tory swing in London.

Happily for Woking, "Motormouth" now has a much larger 19,842 majority to fritter away before another safe seat becomes an ejector seat.

'Backbiter

GAS NEWS

MORE bad publicity for British Gas, which has just been caught discussing plans to stop helping the blind and partially-sighted.

Now, having fleeced customers and showroom staff to pay chairman Cedric Brown's £475,000 salary, it is attacking the OAPs who once worked for it. It has stopped a £5,000 annual grant to The Golden Age Society, a club for retired gas workers in Cardiff, which used the cash for such greedy things as a monthly get-together and an annual trip to the seaside.

EDUCATION NEWS

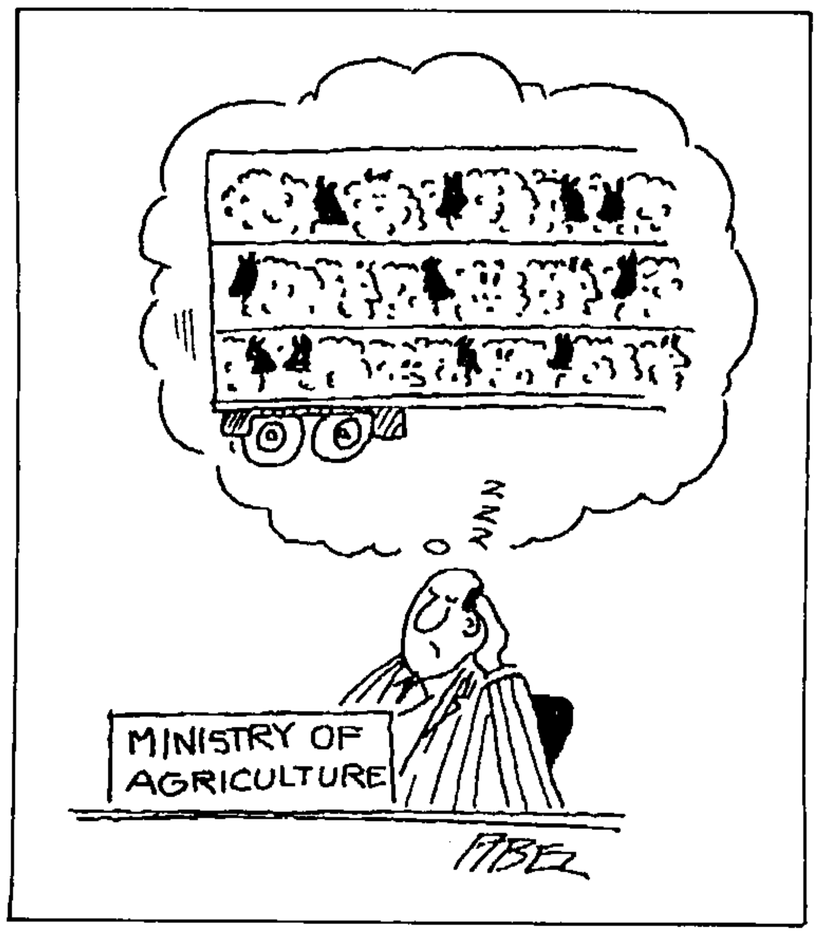
WHILE the number of teenagers is falling the government continues to demand higher student numbers — and it can cause problems.

City of Liverpool Community College, for example, was unable to meet the target number of students set for it by the further eduction funding council quango, and as a consequence lost £3.2 million from its budget.

The college's management team then devised a brilliant wheeze to get round the cut: 150 members of staff are to be made redundant. At the same time, the hunt would continue for new students.

The college set a marketing budget for the year but only half the £26,000 was spent. This went on a miserable leafleting campaign, while competitor colleges got at the potential students via cinema ads.

The college's marketing director (who earns twice the marketing budget), decided something had to be done. So the Merseyside public saw the college's entire senior management out leafleting in the pouring rain. Passing teenagers were assured that starting at college halfway through the academic year wouldn't ruin their chances — after all, there would be lots of staff to help them out. Or there would have been if they hadn't been made redundant.



NOOKS and CORNERS

NEVER have My Lord Palumbo on your panel of assessors. That seems to be the principal lesson learned, so far, from the Cardiff Bay Opera House competition fiasco.

The competition looks set to develop into the funniest architectural farce since the foreign office competition of the 1850s, when Gilbert Scott got the job despite the fact he did not win any of the three competitions held, but then had to change his design from Gothic to Classic at the behest of the prime minister.

This time round disaster was inevitable from the moment the judges announced in favour of the "Crystal Necklace" after a ridiculous competition in which 270 would-be "anonymous" entries had to compete with knighted grandees like Sir Norm Foster, wheeled in at a second stage.

In *Eye* 857 we reported how assessors had chosen an incomprehensible Decontructivist design glamorised in seductive (and impossible) perspective drawings by the office of the rich Iraqi pseud Zaha Hadid. Despite the preposterous plaudits of partisan and fashion-conscious hacks in the introverted and remote world of architecture — "It will be the most significant building by a woman on the planet": Rowan Moore, *Blueprint* — it seems to be loathed by just about everybody in Wales and so is very unlikely to secure the essential millennium funding.

La Hadid complains she is a victim of sexist and racist prejudice, but there is wide support for the scheme by Manfredi Nicoletti, an Eyetie, whose undulating glass roof at least promises to be a distinctive landmark. What, of course, Hadid's acolytes cannot accept is that she is not opposed because she is female or foreign but because she is ridiculous — and her design is, if you ignore its exciting, non-orthogonal geometry, banal and stupid.

It now emerges that the assessors, who now have egg all over their faces, broke their own competition rules at almost every stage, not least by choosing a winning design which they knew could not be built within the budget of £43 million. It also emerges that they could not agree and that the final decision was railroaded through by Paul Koralek and My Lord Palumbo, whose presence on any committee always means trouble.

In fact, both these gentlemen have axes to grind: Koralek, because the design for the National Gallery Extension by Ahrends Burton & Koralek was sunk by royal and public opinion; Palumbo, that pathetic victim of fashion in all that he does, also feels aggrieved and so wishes to have revenge on society by unthinkingly promoting avant-garde arrogance — or "excellence", as he tirelessly drones.

Now everyone is in a state of panic. The Cardiff Bay Opera House Trust has done the predictable indecent thing and effectively dumped Hadid by asking Norman Foster and Nicoletti to revise and resubmit their designs. This has provoked outrage from the president of the RIBA and other big noises, who have appealed to the runners-up not to comply (what will Sir Norm do? Give up a job on principle? Surely not: he has assistants busy working away on a new design...). But what else was the trust to do, when John Redwood, secretary of state for Wales, has indicated that the project cannot be funded if it does not enjoy popular support?

"Cardiff betrays Hadid," runs the headline in *Building Design*; but one might as well say that the wretched assessors betrayed the people of the principality by irresponsibly foisting a preposterous design on them.

Happily there is poetic justice in this delicious mess. It all goes back to the mid-1980s when Mrs Thatcher's Welsh secretary, Nicholas Edwards, dreamed up a great development speculation in the old Cardiff docks. This decayed area, a good mile from the heart of the city, was to be made attractive by making Cardiff Bay a freshwater lake — by building a barrage at a cost of £150 million upwards.

This was bad news for the dunlin and redshank birds for whom the present wetlands — a site of special scientific interest (SSI) — is home. Opponents of the project warned that as well as damaging birds, the barrage could well cause immense environmental damage to Cardiff, but such feeble objections were soon overruled by the national rivers authority (NRA), chairman My Lord Crickhowell, formerly, er, Mr Nicholas Edwards, secretary of state for Wales.

The opera house was yet another wheeze for selling Cardiff's own Canary Wharf, promoted by Crickhowell and also by his political ally, ex-councillor Sir Geoffrey Inkin, installed as chairman of the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation as well as chairman of the Land Authority for Wales. His deputy was another ex-politician — Labour this time — Lord Brooks of Tremorfa, who also became one of the competition assessors.

All seemed to be going well... and then they chose Hadid. This was unfortunate as the principal landowner, Associated British Ports (ABP), wanted the scheme by the Jap, Hasagawa, in the hope of attracting Jap investment; while the development corporation seems to have wanted dear old reliable, and safe, Sir Norm. The Cardiff Business Forum, meanwhile, described the winning design as a "deconstructed pig-sty", and favours Nicoletti. My Lord Crickhowell, having succeeded in becoming chairman of the Opera House Trust (having been initially rejected as he is on the board of ABP) now has to sort out this mess. No, I don't really understand it either, but whatever he does someone will be outraged. Such fun.

"It's never over until the fat lady sings," commented My Lord Brooks. After the competition result was announced, Hadid was overheard explaining to this former Labour MP how two of her colleagues were arrested and shot in Iraq. "Why?" asked Lord Callaghan's former parliamentary agent and now the deputy chairman of the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation. "What did they design, love?"

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

In the transition to a new republic one of the first casualties would be the Union Jack.
Helen Chadwick, one of Britain's most celebrated and controversial artists, offered an alternative.
Chadwick — in 1987 the first woman to be shortlisted for the Turner Prize - suggested a human embryo, symbolizing the future possibility of a republic of Britain. She subverted the red, white and blue of the Union Jack to transform it into a baroque, placental cot, turning the colours into ribbons attached to the embryo like the arteries and veins of the womb...
Of her new flag she says: "The image of the embryo is classless, ungendered: it is frail yet insistent."

Guardian

Alphonso Lingis. Even his name is a semi-unfurled hard-on.

JOSEPH JACKSON
Modern Review

"They who lose may win tomorrow," suggested Spanish novelist Miguel de Cervantes in his 16th-century classic Don Quixote.
So far as Exeter City are concerned, tomorrow should not have been last night.

ED HOGG
Exeter Express & Echo

What precisely is the role of the modern critic?

GILBERT ADAIR
Sunday Times

Tom Robbins's early books represent the rantings of an erotomanic autodidact poached in a potent syllabub of controlled substances.

ELIZABETH YOUNG
Guardian

So it is that the French anthropologist, Marc Auge, describes the shopping mall as characteristic of a "supermodernity" which is no longer anchored in time and place. The mail is actually a "non-place" — rooted not in soil or regional geography, but in publicity, marketing and recycled images. It is a place of "spatial over-abundance" where one can be in Texas, Tokyo, California and Gateshead all at once. According to Auge, the shopping mall is less a substitute for reality than a "perpetual present" contained within an immense parenthesis. As long as their credit holds up, people can leave their social being in the car park and step inside to enjoy the wholly individualised pleasures of "identity loss" and role playing.

PATRICK WRIGHT
Guardian

De Monchaux challenges our deep-seated perceptions of the homely Christmas tree and in so doing re-awakens lost symbolic memories.

TFont=OptimaThe rich blue of the velvet, visible in only a few exposed "slashes", suggests the traditional colour of the Virgin's robe in Renaissance iconography. The slashes themselves, disclosing a textural sensuality, become almost vulval. This is part of the artist's intention. The tree for De Monchaux is "a 20ft-high phallic object", its wrapping an illustration of Mary's sexual independence. "I was using a pagan symbol to provoke ideas about the virgin birth," she says.

IAIN GALE
Independent

CONTRIBUTORS: Everyone, A. Non, D. Wightman, J. Schott, K. Wilson, Lord Gnome, A. Lehmann.

£10 paid for entries

EYE TV

Ghosts (BBC1)
Tears Before Bedtime (BBC1)
Casualty (BBC1)

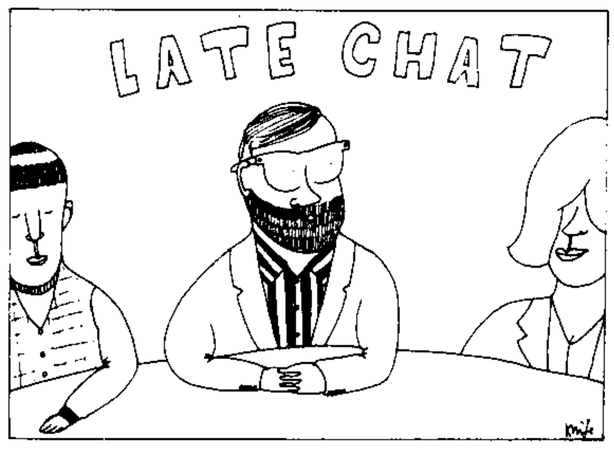
PERHAPS because BBC1 controller Alan Yentob has been having so many nightmares about drama recently, his channel launched on Saturday a new series of dramas about nightmares.

Somebody at the corporation has noticed that the lists of best-selling books are frequently filled with horror and ghost stories — Stephen King, James Herbert, Virginia Andrews — and so the channel's elusive pursuit of C1 viewers now incorporates this set of spook plays, called **Ghosts**.

The first offering resembled off-cuts from *EastEnders*, rewritten by Edgar Allen Poe. There was even a former Queen Vic regular, Anita Dobson, as the wife of a Kray-like gangster doing life, played by Derrick O'Connor. It's really important his missus keeps her knickers clean for him while he's out of combat, and his visiting bruvva assures him she is: "She could audition for the bloody *Sound of Music*, mate."

Then Jack, the lifer, gets stabbed during a bit of argy in the bang-up. During restorative surgery, he has an out-of-body experience, which leaves him curled in a foetal position in white y-fronts on the ceiling of the operating theatre. Stitched up and back in his cell, Jack becomes fascinated by near death experiences and "astral projection", on which he reads up in the prison library. Soon, he shaves his head, becomes a Buddhist and is able at will to leave his body and soar over the River Thames — in a kind of spiritual version of the *EastEnders* opening credits sequence — towards his home. During his first out-of-body experience, he is able to observe invisibly as his missus has an in-the-body experience with his bruvva.

Furious — and, to the pedantic viewer, perhaps rather abandoning his Buddhist creed — Jack becomes a ghostly gangster, engineering the deaths of both his missus and his bruvva. Jack's ability to walk through walls permits a police-baffling murder in a locked and guarded room — a stock plot of detective fiction — and, as Jack is taken for dead during one of his out-of-body experiences, he is able to wake up in a coffin: a stock plot in horror fiction since Poe.



"What I find really astonishing is the fact that nobody's used the word 'resonance' tonight"

Viewers finding this rubbish — more ghastly than ghostly — on BBC1 may have wondered if Alan Yentob were having an out-of-mind experience. But it is now clear how the controller intends to address the horrible paradox of his job: satisfying cabinet and tabloid pressure for high-ratings drama while also observing BBC traditions of quality and distinctiveness. The old theory — that even the BBC's mass-audience dramas had to be in some way more daring and intelligent than ITV's — has now been abandoned. The new policy is targeted drama: an attempt to make all sections of the audience feel there is something in the output to justify the licence fee.

So the slobs get **Ghosts**, while the yuppies get **Tears Before Bedtime**, BBC1's new Sunday night serial. Rarely has there been a BBC drama so narrowly aimed than that. Not only farmers are interested in the work of a vet (*All Creatures Great And Small*), not only the old are intrigued by comedies about ageing (hence the success of *One Foot In The Grave*), but it is genuinely and unmovably the case that only middle-class parents with children are interested in the problems of finding, keeping, and sharing a house with nannies. By yuppies with nannies — Alan Yentob has two young children and a working partner — and for yuppies with nannies, *Tears Before Bedtime* depends on its comedy wholly on recognition. At 9.35 on a Sunday night, they could actually just turn off the BBC1 transmitters in all regions except north London.

This isn't as dumb as it looks. The overall ratings may be low — as, indeed they are for *Tears Before Bedtime* — but the advantage of target drama is that, pressed for an example of a specific BBC programme they liked, almost everyone will be able to find an answer.

The disadvantage for the viewer is that a very clear division between high and low drama has been created. The saddest casualty of this policy is, neatly, **Casualty**. When this series began it was used by BBC executives as an example of how public-service mass-audience drama differed from that produced by the commercial channel. The series carried political and ethical debate. Now — called in to service as a slob-drama — it is crude and stupidly melodramatic, ducking out of the NHS debate, by a horrible irony, at the exact moment that criticism of government policy is so mainstream that even the floppy Jeremy Lee-Potter has spoken out.

What you get now in *Casualty* is a collection of wincingly predictable plot-lines. Saturday's episode actually began with a girl feeling sick at breakfast while the camera took in the huge crucifix looming above the cooker. That the parents didn't guess she was pregnant — as a product of religiously-imposed ignorance — can only be because they were even more stupid than the viewer was assumed to be.

'Square Eyes'

CHANNEL ONE (VIEWER)

HAVE you heard of Channel One? There's no particular reason why you should have: it's an obscure, bargain-basement cable TV station, launched a few weeks ago, which is only available in London.

If you read the *Daily Mail* or the London *Evening Standard*, however, you might well be under the impression that Channel One is the most exciting development in broadcasting since the invention of the cathode-ray tube.

The hype began on 24 May last year with a big news story in the *Standard* revealing that "a new 24-hour cable television network tailor-made for London was born today in an historic agreement which is set to change the face of viewing in the capital". The new channel, which was due to start in November, would be "at the leading edge of TV journalism", offering a "unique" package of "news, sport, entertainment, local travel and weather". (Very unique, eh?)

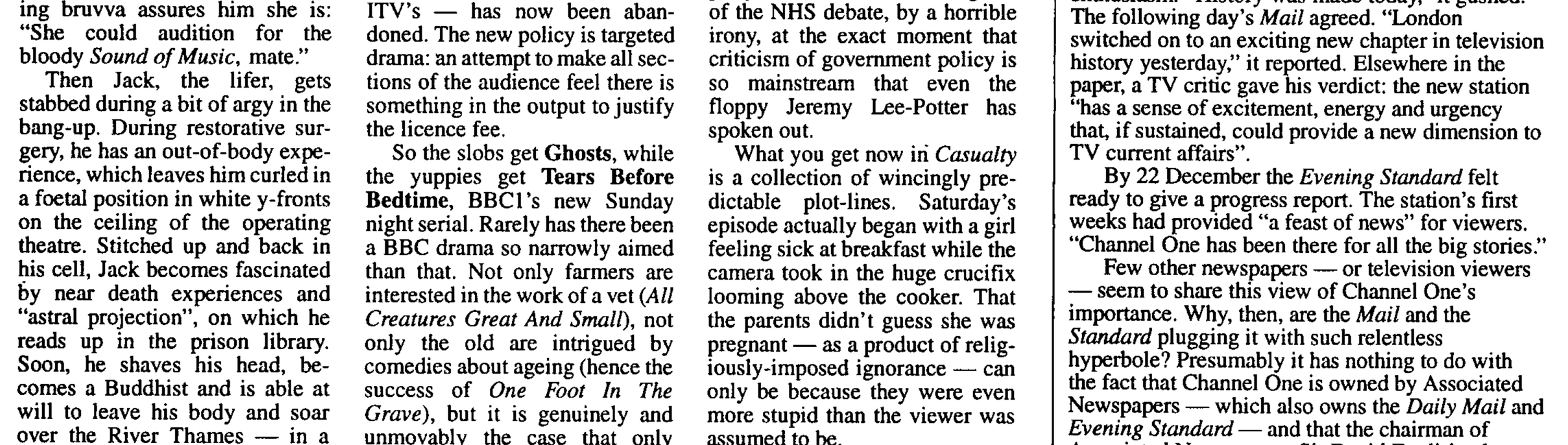
On 25 October the *Mail* was caught up in the excitement. Under the headline "Stage One in a TV Revolution", it reported that Channel One "will boast an elite team of video journalists" who would "revolutionise TV". A week later, for the benefit of any readers who hadn't been paying attention, the *Mail* carried a full-page story on the subject. Channel One "will change the face of TV", it revealed, with a "winning blend of journalism and entertainment".

On 16 November the *Standard* reported another thrilling development: Channel One had announced its first three anchor-people, all of them "top-class presenters with a tremendous range of experience and skills between them". The glittering trio was named as, er, Gwyn Jones, Fiona McDiarmid and Paddy Haycocks (*Who they? Ed.*)

When Channel One finally went on the air, on 30 November, the *Standard* could hardly contain its enthusiasm. "History was made today," it gushed. The following day's *Mail* agreed. "London switched on to an exciting new chapter in television history yesterday," it reported. Elsewhere in the paper, a TV critic gave his verdict: the new station "has a sense of excitement, energy and urgency that, if sustained, could provide a new dimension to TV current affairs".

By 22 December the *Evening Standard* felt ready to give a progress report. The station's first weeks had provided "a feast of news" for viewers. "Channel One has been there for all the big stories."

Few other newspapers — or television viewers — seem to share this view of Channel One's importance. Why, then, are the *Mail* and the *Standard* plugging it with such relentless hyperbole? Presumably it has nothing to do with the fact that Channel One is owned by Associated Newspapers — which also owns the *Daily Mail* and *Evening Standard* — and that the chairman of Associated Newspapers, Sir David English, also happens to be the chairman of Channel One.



MEDIA NEWS

TO THE fury and embarrassment of Birtian apparatchiks, the Tory MP Michael Fabricant last week put down an early day motion in the Commons headed "BBC Expenses and Retirement of Graham Leach".

Leach is the Beeb's former correspondent in South Africa — and, more recently, Brussels — who resigned from the corporation for "personal reasons" a few weeks ago and has since signed up with London News Radio.

Fabricant's motion refers to "persistent stories regarding expense claims of over six figures from the BBC, and consequently the licence payer, from one journalist including claims for (i) the cost of air freighting pianos from South Africa to Europe, (ii) the purchase of a lawnmower for a fifth-floor apartment, (iii) the apparent acquisition of fax paper documented on a Harrods invoice for over £500, (iv) the provision of office furniture which subsequently could not be found in a BBC audit, and (v) the expense of paying for the education of his children at private schools even when the journalist was based back in Britain". He also seeks "urgent reassurance" as to the reasons for Leach's resignation.

In a second motion, which seeks "information as to the transfer from Moscow of the BBC correspondent Kevin Connolly", Fabricant asks for confirmation that "it is not the case that the satellite link equipment at the BBC's news centre in Moscow was used by a BBC Moscow correspondent to make unauthorised international telephone calls".

A BBC spokesman has dismissed the allegations as "absolutely groundless" fabrications — or, as the case may be, Fabricantations. Nevertheless many BBC hacks are still convinced that *some* sort of expenses scandal has been hushed up. Before Christmas, several newspapers reported that another (unnamed) foreign correspondent had charged the BBC £16,000 to have World Cup commentaries fed to him over the telephone. In fact, the bill was for £16,840, which was the cost of the man's incessant use of sexy chatlines back in Britain: an internal audit found more than 400 calls to a "Lesbian Lust" number over a three-month period. Fearful that the affair's salacious overtones would be bad for the BBC's image, a senior executive has instructed staff to stick to the world cup version of the story.

"Don't give me that pathetic martyred look, Sebastian"

DESPONDENT staff at Radio One Listener will soon have to stop their little on-air joke of playing D:ream's chartbuster *Things can only get better* every time someone else jumps ship.

They fear that when controller Matthew Bannister finally goes, he'll leave things in as poor a state as they now are at *GLR*, the playground where the Birt *Wünderkind* learnt everything he knows (i.e. how to lose half his listeners).

GLR now has a pathetic 1 per cent of London's radio audience and desperate attempts to implement Birtian cutbacks look set to make things worse. Staff start the day by dusting their desks because the contract cleaners have been cancelled on three days a week. Hacks preparing news bulletins were recently told to try to delay making telephone calls until after 6pm. And, to ensure a final nosedive, appearance fees have been reduced to £10, or £25 for "celebs".

News of the Screws TV critic Charlie Catchpole, who reviewed the papers one morning last week, was flattered to be offered the larger amount. "But anyone who works for that money must be desperate," Catchpole tells the *Eye*. Er, quite.

Andrew Neill and Asian Babe (prob. not Fatima Whitbread)

ANDREW NEILL is looking forward to his new TV talk show after the last one was elbowed aside in the ratings war by the Open University.

Neill is now presiding over *Is This Your Life?*, which will go out on Channel Four just before the pub crowd gets home on a Saturday night (Neill was second choice for the show, and clinched it only when his friend David Mellor pulled out after the Lady Cobham fiasco).

The show intends to confront celebrities with jangling skeletons from their closet, the ex-*Sunset Times* editor probing for all he is worth. The concept has proved very unappealing, and refusal followed refusal before the first guest was finally cornered.

And the big name who will launch the show? The one and only Fatima Whitbread. Presumably Britain's most famous javelin hurler cannot realise the show's intent. If Neill is on the ball he will ask Fatima about her husband, Andy Norman, who lost his top athletics job after allegations that he drove Cliff Temple, an athletics journalist on the *Sunset Times* under Neill, to suicide.

QUAKE WATCH

FOREIGNERS' lives, as every news editor knows, are far less valuable than those of Britons. This was proved again last week by Fleet Street's coverage of the Japanese tremor.

The tone was set by the Press Association news agency, which put out the following story within hours of the quake: "A teenage British model was thrown out of bed by the tremor which tore through Japan today and had to flee her apartment in her nightdress. Joanne Griffiths, 19, from Sheffield is on a six-month fashion modelling contract in the port city of Kobe, where the quake wreaked devastation. She was cut by flying glass but phoned home to reassure her parents that she was not badly hurt... The British embassy in Tokyo was trying to contact some of the 1,500 Britons who live in and around the area affected by the quake. A spokesman said early indications were 'reassuring'."

Not so reassuring for the thousands of dead Japanese, of course — but who cares about them? Later in the day the PA put out an update, revealing that "another British teenage model", Jade Sparks, had been "caught up in the earthquake emergency".

The next morning's papers followed the PA's fine example of news values. "I FLED QUAKE IN NIGHTIE" was the *Sun's* headline over a story about how Joanne Griffiths had escaped the devastation. The *Daily Mirror* carried a photograph of singer Billy Joel — who, although he isn't British, is at least a celebrity and therefore far more interesting than a lot of anonymous Japanese victims. Joel, the *Mirror* revealed, had been in an Osaka hotel at the time of the quake and found it "terrifying". For good measure, the *Mirror* also ran a full-page interview with the ubiquitous Joanne Griffiths and Jade Sparks — "MY BAREFOOT PANIC IN QUAKE NIGHTMARE: *Brit Models Flee As City Blazes*".

The *Daily Mail's* front-page splash showed an equally patriotic sense of priorities. Under the headline "BRITONS MISSING IN QUAKE HORROR" it reported that "three British students were among the 1,000 people still missing last night in Japan's earthquake disaster." Only in the third paragraph did the *Mail* deign to mention, briefly, that at least 1,800 Japanese had lost their lives — but it swiftly returned to the most important subject: "Other Britons told of their narrow escapes..."

Best of all, however, was the headline on the *Independent's* editorial: "Kobe: Why Did So Few Die?" — an eerie echo of "Small Earthquake in Chile: Not Many Dead", Claud Cockburn's apocryphal *Times* headline from many years ago. The only difference was that Cockburn meant it as a joke.

MUSIC NEWS

LORD Gowrie, chairman of the Arts Council, made some encouraging noises last week.

Supporting the economic argument that arts spending more than repays investment, he is now spearheading the campaign to raise spending to 1 percent of total public spending — a rise of £700 million on the current figure. And this from a former "dry" treasury minister!

He also gave an indication that he wants to see lottery funds used to commission new music, regarding this as capital spending. At present all such support comes from the already overstretched Arts Council grants of the companies involved. This new initiative will be welcomed by orchestras, arts centres and music festivals, not to mention budding Mozarts.

Meanwhile the begging bowls are being held out to the millennium commission by those hoping for spoils from the lottery. Much has been made of the pitch of the greediest giant, the Royal Opera House. And across the river the proposed rehash at "Abominable's" South Bank will appeal to every window cleaner in the land. But would it do anything to improve the acoustics of the Royal Festival Hall, or make the South Bank a less terrifying place to visit?

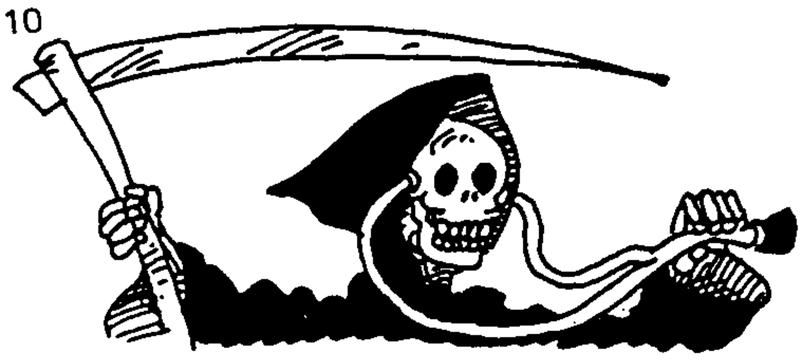
However, much less attention has been paid to the very ambitious plan put forward by Denis Vaughan, whose brainchild the lottery was. His six-venue performing arts centre, housing all the opera and ballet companies, has the enormous bonus of incorporating the famous Kingsway Hall as a rehearsal and recording venue. Currently home to the Lesbian Ladies' Collective, Kingsway is commonly thought to have the finest acoustics in the world for recording, and gave rise to many of the most famous post-war recordings by Karajan and Klemperer. Were it saved for Vaughan's Centre it would be excellent news for London's orchestras.

THE YEAR has begun badly for Louise Badger, boss of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and a manager from the "agree with me or you're fired" school favoured until recently at Dame Detta's Barbican.

On 11 January the orchestra passed a vote of no confidence in her. The final straw seems to have been caused by the 70th birthday of Pierre Boulez, the orchestra's former conductor. The BBC players are incensed to see all the concerts to mark the occasion being mounted by the LSO.

Badger's contract expires in November and the word is that it will not be renewed.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'



DOING THE ROUNDS

AN UNSEEMLY row has broken out among London hospital survival-rivals Barts and the Royal London following the appointment of Sir Colin Berry, dean of the Royal London, as warden of the combined trust in preference to Professor Lesley Rees, dean of Barts.

The appointment was swiftly followed by leaks to the press of Sir Colin's alleged misdiagnosis of two cases of breast cancer eight years ago. The London countered with public allegations from five consultants, including casualty chief Alistair Wilson and director of surgery David MacLean, that Barts was waging a dirty tricks campaign to escape closure.

This allegedly included keeping patients on makeshift beds in casualty when there were proper beds elsewhere, and packing the department with non-emergencies to make it look busier. Professor Mike Besser of Barts dismissed this as "wicked manipulation of the facts by five extremely worried men resorting to pathetic measures to discredit the campaign".

And they'll all be working together soon...

Meanwhile Barts casualty is due to close on 27 January despite claims by **City and Hackney community health council** that the Royal London isn't ready to cope with the extra work. This hasn't stopped the Royal London redirecting ambulances to its site long before the closure date to make Barts casualty appear less busy than it should.

● SENIOR executives at **Aberdeen Royal Hospitals trust** magnanimously agreed to accept a pay freeze last year because "things were tight". Not only that, but they didn't want to inflame the rest of their public sector workforce who were restricted to a 1.5 percent rise.

Despite this chief executive James Barbour collected £79,000 for the year's work, up 5 percent on the previous one. A spokesman explained: "Mr Barbour's basic pay was frozen. The extra 5 percent came in bonuses." Mr Barbour has since left the trust.

● Also leaving in credit is Colin Ralph, surly ex-chief executive of the **UK Central Council for Nursing** (*Eyes passim*), whose redundancy package has so far cost the council £116,865. In addition Mr Ralph will receive career advice and counselling.

● **GREENWICH healthcare NHS trust** and **Bexley and Greenwich health authority** are inviting discussions on the proposed closure of **Brook** and **Greenwich district general hospitals**, with transfer of services to **Queen Elizabeth military hospital**.

The closure date for consultation is 31 January, but despite this 350 employees of the Brook have already received letters from the director of personnel telling them their jobs are in jeopardy. None of the doctors has received such a letter, presumably because the trust is hoping to enlist their support.

● IN 1992 Virginia Bottomley declared that the **London ambulance service**'s problems were not due to lack of money. In 1995 the Wells inquiry, which followed the tragic death of Nasima Begum, uncovered a need for £13.9 million worth of capital improvements and an annual income boost of £2.7 million.

A modernised control room, new telephone system and hand held radios are unlikely to appear for free. LAS aims to reach 85 percent of calls within 14 minutes by March 1995, but managed only 68 percent at the last count. Nasima Begum waited 53 minutes for hers, and as one ambulance driver put it: "This was not an isolated incident...

● THE father of Georgina Robinson, the occupational therapist who was stabbed to death by a mentally ill patient on unsupervised leave from **Torbay's Edith Morgan Centre**, has called for the resignation of three managers.

But **South Devon healthcare trust** chief executive Tony Parr, chair Tony Boyce and director of nursing Hilary Cunliffe, are all staying put. As Mr Boyce put it: "There will be no disciplinary action or resignation at board level. Everybody accepts responsibility for what happened."

● **WEST Midlands RHA** has "got things under control" after a surge of 200 emergency admissions caused the cancellation of routine operations in mid-January. WMRHA has also demanded an apology from the *Sunday Times* over an article claiming that it employed private detectives to spy on doctors. As a spokesman put it: "We only did it once, and that was four years ago".

● HILARY DOHERTY, manager of **Staffordshire** county council's team overseeing transfer of patients with learning difficulties from **Stallington hospital** into the community, has awarded a contract to look after them to London-based Care Solutions. The director of Care Solutions is Mr Ken Young, her husband.

● THE proliferation of human resource managers in the NHS has prompted **Birmingham FHSA** to clarify its role; "Human resource management is directed mainly at management needs and human resources (not necessarily employees) to be provided and deployed. There is a greater emphasis on planning, monitoring and control, rather than on problem solving and mediation. It is totally identified with management interests, being a general management activity, and is relatively distant from the workforce as a whole."

M.D

DOWN ON THE FARM

AS the ministry of agriculture (aka the Maffia) revealed plans to close as many as 200 slaughterhouses — on top of the 200-plus units closed since the meat "hygiene" regulations came into force in January 1993 — the real agenda became transparently clear.

What it amounts to is that the slaughtering sector, now down 525 abbatoirs, is split into three groups. At the bottom are 225 very small — or "low output" — units, which service 1 per cent of the market. At the other end are 100 large "approved" units, which take 41 per cent. In the middle are 200 medium to large operators which take 58 per cent, but which are not up to the full EC "hygiene" standard.

The "EC 100" are working grossly under capacity yet have invested millions in "upgrading" standards — one plant alone has spent £12 million — at the behest of the Maffia. As a result few if any are making any money.

But in return for their grovelling compliance, from 1 April, the Maffia has promised to close down as many of the middle 200 slaughterhouses as it can get away with, allowing the "EC 100" to grab the spare capacity and rake in the cash without increasing their overheads. And as a final part of the deal, the new "rationalised" meat industry will bung more than £44.2 million a year of its extra dosh to the Meat Hygiene Service (*Eyes passim*). This will keep the Maffia officials who engineered the whole scam in the security of their new and highly paid jobs.

The ultimate irony is that while the animal rights activists campaign in Shoreham and elsewhere against live exports, there will be so few abattoirs left in Britain that animals for the domestic market will end up travelling further than those destined for the continent — and the whole thing is happening under their noses and without their even realising it.

AN unlikely beneficiary of EC slaughtering laws has been Councillor Margaret Chapman, member of East Yorkshire borough council environmental health committee, a former mayor and small-time poultry breeder.

Faced with a demand for payment of something less than £200 from a local processor for slaughtering and dressing her Christmas geese, she has now invoked the hygiene regulations which prohibit small processors from killing any other than their own produce.

The unfortunate processor has been told that if he pursues his claim she will take advantage of her lofty position in the council to call in the hygiene police to have him closed down for "illegal" slaughter. Isn't it wonderful how useful these hygiene laws have become?

VEGETABLE and fruit growers are beginning to regret starting their own research quango, the Horticultural Development Council (HDC). Set up in 1986, it raises roughly £3 million a year from about 3,500 growers by compulsory levy.

Last year the HDC came up for review and its mandate had to be renewed. At the time, considerable dissatisfaction was being expressed with its performance and there was a feeling that there should be a vote on whether it should continue. There was no *legal* requirement for a vote, and the then agriculture minister, Gillian Shephard, decided to consult only "representative organisations".

One of these organisations was the NFU, and although local NFU branches supported a ballot, the headquarters committee voted against. This left Shephard clear to renew the HDC mandate for another five years without consulting industry members.

Outraged growers launched their own ballot, which was completed last week. Of those who voted, more than 92 per cent declared that they got "no benefit" or very little benefit from the HDC. A massive 81 per cent still wanted a formal ballot and a slightly larger number wanted a compulsory ballot every five years.

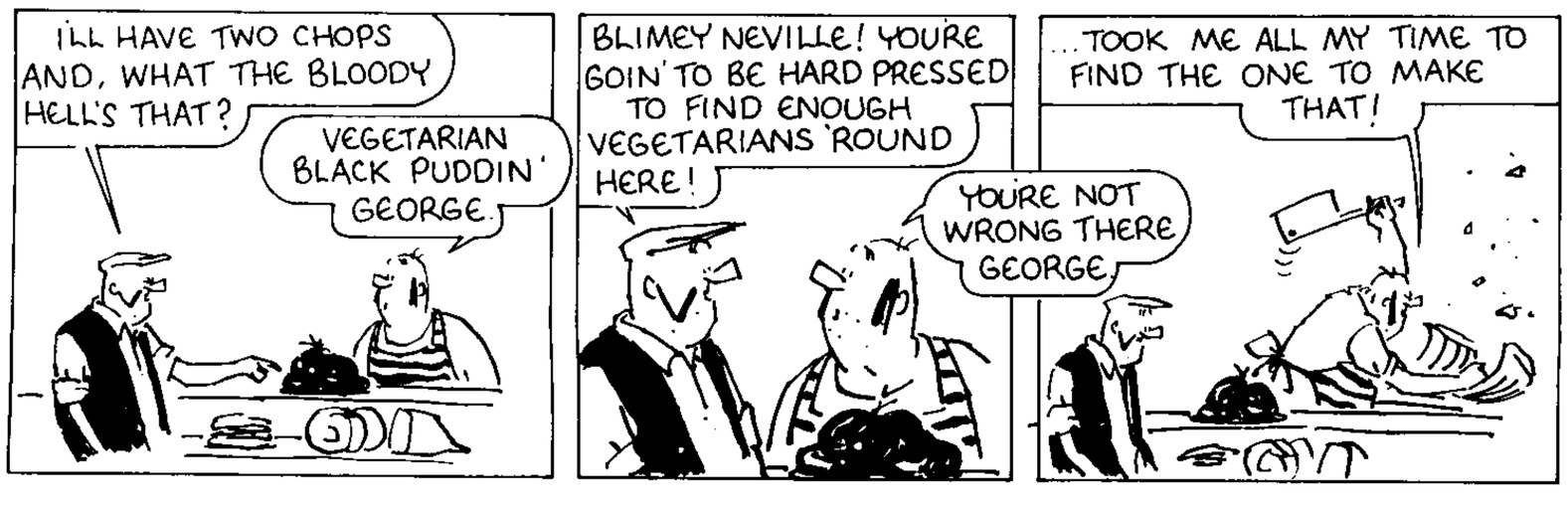
Needless to say the Maffia and the NFU are ignoring the findings. So growers are foisted with an unaccountable quango over which they have no control and which gives them little benefit for their £3 million a year. Unsurprisingly, they regard this as taxation without representation. With the Maffia at the helm, however, it's par for the course.

THE otherwise inexplicable decision of Sweden to vote for entry to the EC can be better understood by the insane action of its animal health officials to incinerate three Arab stallions sent as a gift by the Pakistan government — rather than keep them under quarantine or return them. With this sort of behaviour Swedish officials show themselves to be true soul-mates of our rulers in Brussels.

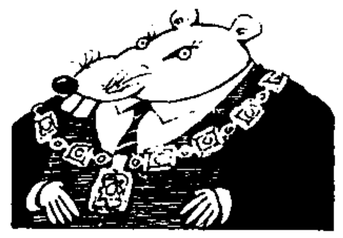
'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


I'LL HAVE TWO CHOPS AND, WHAT THE BLOODY HELL'S THAT?
VEGETARIAN BLACK PUDDIN' GEORGE
BLIMEY NEVILLE! YOURE GOIN' TO BE HARD PRESSED TO FIND ENOUGH VEGETARIANS 'ROUND HERE!
YOURE NOT WRONG THERE GEORGE
...TOOK ME ALL MY TIME TO FIND THE ONE TO MAKE THAT!

THE Rotten Borough Advertiser



ASIAN JOB SCAM

UNEMPLOYMENT among Asian youths in Birmingham is particularly acute, so when a group of Asian councillors suggested a job training scheme they were rewarded with thousands of votes and more than £41,000 in council grants.

The Muslim Unemployment Project was the result, run by the Handsworth-based United Muslim Social and Unemployment Centre (Umsec). That was eight years ago, since when money has flowed from the city council to Umsec and the Muslim Youth Project (MYP). And what does the community have to show for it? Er, nothing. Not even a set of accounts, even though Umsec's grants are conditional on annual accounts.

But fascinating details of Umsec's organisation are now emerging, including the news that:

● Its grant application for the MYP named a Mr Abdul Haq as treasurer. The *Eye* traced Mr Haq and found he knew nothing about it. He could hardly have been a very effective treasurer: he is illiterate in his own language; he speaks no English; he has just returned to Pakistan.

● The main cheque signatories for the MYP were Umsec chairman and Labour councillor Mohammed Azam; his close chum Councillor Haider Zaman; and another friend, Shaukat Ali, a taxi-driver. Oddly the treasurer was not expected to sign cheques — but perhaps that's because he couldn't.

● Umsec is based in Lozells Road in a building rented from ex-councillor Ghazanfar Khan (who left the council in disgrace after persuading the Labour group to put a party whip on his planning application to open a curry house in a strictly residential area).

● The £41,000 included £21,211 capital grants to repair a building at 141 Lozells Road for the MYP. No work has been done but the money is unaccounted for. The building was leased from another member of Umsec's management committee, Sajid Mahmood, at a rent he regarded as very reasonable.

● A development worker employed by Umsec disappeared after a few weeks but his wages continued to be paid.

Despite the continuing lack of accounts, the city council did order some checks — into the backgrounds of Umsec's management committee. It found most were related to each other — except those who didn't actually exist. But it is wrong to suggest that Birmingham council's Labour leadership relies too heavily on the votes of its 14 Asian councillors to risk upsetting them with an un-PC investigation.

"Put it away, Buddy. This is Chicago, not Manchester!"

RACE FARCE

RACE relations police will be examining events in Hackney, Britain's poorest borough and home of the notorious keys-for-sale housing scam, after the "tenancy audit team" there found that large numbers of council staff, some of whom were illegal immigrants, were appointed thanks to bogus references and employment histories.

One estate manager's application claimed that he worked for a housing department in Rome while he was also studying in Nigeria (a former housing manager suggested he may have been commuting!)

The application forms of 16 other senior workers were so bent that housing director Bernard Crofton refused to confirm their appointments. But Crofton himself is now in trouble with the council's race relations mafia having accused a black colleague, personnel head Sam Yeboah, of failing to deal with these allegations.

Crofton is currently suspended on grounds of racial harassment, although his own record in combatting racism is a worthy one: from helping draw up the Commission for Racial Equality's housing policies to closing down clubs used by the National Front in Ealing.

Yeboah, Hackney's self-styled "most senior African employee", has cleverly removed attention from the illegal immigrants-dodgy references scandal to the shibboleth of racism in the town hall. Interestingly, his own personnel file has gone missing. Those trying to piece together a new one may like some help. In 1985 his naturalisation papers were signed by council colleague Cathy Warnock, the live-in partner of the Hackney official who suggested Crofton be suspended for bringing Hackney, of all places, into disrepute.

OLYMPIC MONEY WASTING

MANCHESTER city council leader Graham Stringer has always maintained that not a penny of public money was spent on organising or marketing the city's disastrous bid to host the 2000 Olympics.

Everything, even the junketing, he said, was paid for by businessmen. Indeed, the bid committee published its accounts last March and they showed a £1,600 surplus. But what is this?

Manchester council chief executive Arthur Sandford has now published a report showing that it cost the public £981,000 to mount the bid. *What* a surprise.

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

LEWISHAM Council issued a housing benefit cheque for £43.13. Before banking the cheque, the benefit claimant decided to add a few extra figures to perk things up a bit — and £43.13 became £250,243.13. Incredibly, the altered cheque was cleared by the local Co-op branch in Lewisham without the authorisation that is meant to occur for such a large sum. And the error remained *completely* unnoticed by council finance bosses for over a year.

When the alteration was finally discovered by Lewisham it decided to take the bank to court to reclaim the money. The high court has now agreed that the Co-op must not only pay back the full amount but also a further £50,000 in interest.

IN BRIEF

LAMBETH: The education committee met to cut £18 million from the education budget and made no decisions at all — except to pass an "emergency" resolution on a campaign against cuts. It stated that "Lambeth resources, including paper, envelopes and photocopies, have been used in this campaign"; and that if the orchestrators were found to be council employees they would be disciplined. The budget crisis rumbles on...

MURKEYSIDE: While local fire officers beg the government for more money — failure to get it will mean £3 million in cuts and fewer firemen — fire authority bosses have bought six BMW cars to save on "travel expenses". The luxury German motors will cost only £120,000 — a bargain when you consider some fire officers have been waiting for new lavatory paper for more than a fortnight.

LOTHIAN: The region's Labour majority is dead serious about car pollution: it had Lothian join the Car-Free Cities Club, and it substantially increased charges for a popular Edinburgh car park. This left thousands of furious commuters trying to find a meter — a problem well known to car-hating councillors. Well, no actually. Every member of Lothian has a free reserved space in a car park. There are no spaces free during council business.

WESTMINSTER: The council has found a brilliant way to get rid of its non-Tory voting homeless: pack 'em off to Watford. Still embroiled in the gerrymandering scandal, the council wants to relocate families from its housing list 15 miles north because there is a shortage of local land. The Hertfordshire burghers are not too happy at the idea — especially since Westminster wants Watford to take on the extra costs.

WORLD OF HYPE

MORE on Max Clifford, softcore PR peddler, and the Streatham nightclub Caesar's.

Clifford organised a lavish launch for the club, at the end of which it was announced that £10,000 had been raised for the Roy Castle Cause For Hope Appeal. Mrs Castle had flown from the Isle of Man to attend the money-raising event, and thousands of young things turned out to support it, too.

It was all a huge success, the charity volunteers thought as they waited for their cash... and waited... and waited... until a pathetic £1,700 in cheques dribbled through the letterbox.

Not surprisingly they are now somewhat annoyed and there are accusations in the air that Roy Castle's name has been used as a publicity stunt.

Caesar's management mentions a burglary and over-estimates, and says it cannot be held liable.

LLOYD'S

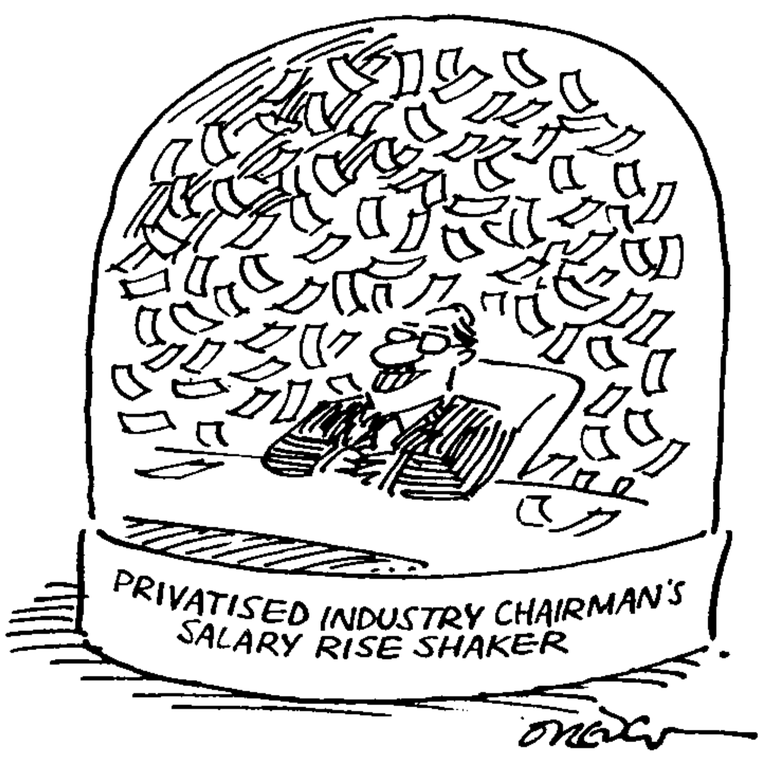
WILL the Kobe earthquake bury Lloyd's of London? The awful possibility that the greatest insurance market in the world is insolvent and should not be trading has been haunting the City for several months.

It has even led to the formation of a special and secret cabinet sub-committee to look into the consequences; and the solvency of Lloyd's will be prominent on the agenda of the forthcoming sessions of the biggest and most influential Commons select committee — for the treasury and civil service.

A letter to the committee from the chairman of the influential Names Defence Association, Mr John Finlay, has come to the *Eye*. It refers to five research projects undertaken in recent months by members of the association, mostly lawyers and accountants who are not names at Lloyd's.

The most devastating of these is Project 5, which concludes: "On many classes of business, almost all policy years go into loss during years four and six, after having accounting profits shown to Names at year three. It is of course at year three that managing underwriters take their profit commissions. The findings of this project indicate that syndicates throughout Lloyd's have for the last 20 years and more issued false and misleading accounts to Names at year three. The losses incurred at Lloyd's over the last 20 years have been covered up by creative and misleading accounting practices and have been financed by the drawing in of ever more members and ever increasing new capital."

All this will made much worse by the huge claims in reinsurance resulting mainly from the fire losses in Kobe. Many insurance experts predict (and many names hope) that the Lutine bell will toll for the last time in 1995.



QUANGO NEWS

IF A "Fat Cat of the Year" competition is ever held, Sir Desmond Pitcher is almost certainly bound to win it.

His £338,000 a year salary as chairman of North West Water makes him the highest overpaid (*shurely "paid"? Ed.*) boss of a privatised water company. He has been summoned before the Commons employment committee to justify his salary, but since parliament has no powers to subpoena he doesn't have to attend.

Pitcher's absence was noted when the public accounts committee investigated the loss of more than £1 million of taxpayers' money arising from the tall ships fiasco in 1992 (*Eyes 820, 848*). As chairman of the Merseyside development corporation (MDC), Sir Des approved the event's climax "Fanfare for the New World" concert to be handled by Carroll Promotions — a company with only £2 in assets — run by his old pal Brendan Carroll.

More than 30 private companies are furious at being owed money by Carroll Promotions because they were under the impression the whole event was underwritten by the MDC. Among the creditors is the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, which hoped to get paid £28,000 for playing at the concert. The chairman of the RLPO's development fund is someone called Sir Desmond Pitcher.

Some MPs have called for Pitcher's resignation from the MDC, but how would he while away the empty hours? After all, he's only got his water job, his stint at the Phil, his post on the board of Everton FC, his non-executive chairmanship at Littlewoods, a directorship at NatWest bank, his fellowship at John Moores University, his chair at the Mersey Barrage Co, and his duties as deputy lieutenant to fill his day.

THE HOUSING Corporation, one of Britain's biggest quangos, is the government-appointed regulator of 3,000 housing associations.

The associations themselves are now bidding to take over thousands of council housing management contracts, but they face fierce competition from private sector bidders like Johnson Fry, a Bath-based property consortium which made tens of millions out of BES schemes.

How fortunate that Johnson Fry has been able to recruit Derek Waddington, a former Birmingham city council officer, as a non-executive director. For Mr Waddington also just happens to be a member of the Housing Corporation board.

Only the meanminded would suggest that sensitive information about housing associations which Mr Waddington sees as a regulator might be of any interest to him as a board member of one of those association's commercial competitors. And mercifully the *Eye* has no space for that sort of snide insinuation...

FIRE NEWS

THOSE in charge of south London's firefighters are set to award themselves big pay rises while those at the bottom of the ladder (*sic*) are rewarded with a pay-cut.

The leaders of the recently reorganised London fire divisions are in line to receive a healthy 17 percent rise, taking their salaries to more than £44,000. Bizarrely, these increases are part of a £1,000,000-plus cost-cutting exercise.

But mirroring British Gas — a rise for Cedric Brown and cuts for gas showroom staff — the fire brigade is also proposing to cut the pay of more than 50 support staff by an average 12 percent, reducing their salaries to £14,000.

A final decision will be made on 23 March and union leaders warn that industrial action could follow if the proposals are implemented.

POLICE 5

FRAMED businessman Kevin Taylor's £20 million damages claim against Greater Manchester police is on the point of ending amid farcical circumstances.

Taylor, who was inadvertently caught up in the John Stalker affair 10 years ago, is suing GMP for malicious prosecution. He claims his business empire was ruined in 1988 after he was accused of defrauding the Co-op bank. The case against him broke down when it became apparent Knacker had no evidence.

But now GMP's defence against Taylor's latest allegations is in tatters. The Manchester police authority's insurer, Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI), has ceased trading having incurred huge losses protecting gullible councils that invested in the BCCI bank. With MMI using up its dwindling assets it wants to withdraw cover from the authority's legal costs and has offered Taylor a derisory £625,000 compensation. Taylor, unsurprisingly, is holding out for the full amount.

Meanwhile the Labour-controlled police authority still supports Knacker despite the latter's legacy of cock-ups in the affair, including "losing" two drawers of files from GMP's headquarters. Sadly councillors simply won't admit that they got things wrong at the beginning of this long and complex affair by supporting Knacker's hounding of former deputy chief constable John Stalker without knowing what the charges against him were.

ON THE RAILWAYS

THE report into the Cannon Street rail crash recommended that 30-year-old railway carriages, like those involved in the crash, needed to be replaced immediately on safety grounds. Everyone agreed, or so it seemed.

But such concerns for safety appear to be another victim of the mad rail sell-off. British Rail has announced that there is no business case for replacing the clapped-out carriages on south-east commuter lines for another four or five years.

One immediate consequence of this decision is that York carriageworks ABB will close in a few months with the loss of 750 jobs. So, if the carriages are ever replaced, the order and the jobs will go abroad because Britain will have lost the skills and the plant to produce them.

In the meantime the Government must hope that the next railway disaster happens after it has flogged the whole thing off — so it can pass the buck and deny all responsibility.

THE government is giving its pals in the road lobby another helping hand by cutting the number of inspectors who look out for dangerous lorries on our roads.

The number of inspectors is already pathetic — just six for the whole of west and south Yorkshire and Humberside — even though one third of the lorries stopped in roadside checks are found to be breaking the law. Faulty brakes, overloaded or unlicensed vehicles, speeding and drivers working longer hours than the legal maximum all contribute to the two deaths which happen in accidents involving lorries every day.

But now road hauliers are to be given even greater liberty to break the law. In the drive for 20 per cent savings ordered by former transport secretary John MacGregor, the department of transport is to cut a third of its lorry inspectors within two years.

The declining safety of the road haulage industry is in marked contrast to the climate on the railways, where locomotives are checked every few days and wagons are checked before and during each journey. (Lorries are formally checked just once a year, and 23 percent fail their MoT tests). And as British Rail is split up, every rail freight operator will have to pass a thorough safety test before Railtrack allows it on the rails, Railtrack itself being watched by the health and safety executive (HSE).

The expense of operating within such strict safety controls is one factor that stops rail freight being competitive with corner-cutting road haulage. With the planned inspection cuts, transport secretary Brian Mawhinney will guarantee more goods going by road, more unsafe lorries, more deaths in accidents involving lorries and, er, more cash for the Conservative party from the road lobby.

"Incredible, Carstairs! We've found it at last!"

Letters

● ***Many thanks to the hundreds of readers who wrote in to express their sadness at Peter Cook's death. Your sympathies and tributes will be passed on to his family. Ed.***

Getting the hang of it

Sir,

After many years of buying your organ, I finally took out a subscription two months ago in the hope that I could cancel it after being outraged/offended. I have now found a cartoon in what I consider to be dubious taste: I refer of course to the cartoon on page 17 depicting the dangling feet of the alleged mass murderer Fred West (EYE *863)*

Unfortunately I am unable to cancel my subscription as I found it highly amusing.

Regards,
RICHARD PRICE,
Ipswich, Suffolk.

Safe bet

Sir,

Aldous Balls: Safety is our top priority — there is no way we would run unsafe plant. There is no way we could run unsafe plant — this country's nuclear safety regulators are among the toughest and most effective in the world.

We know that, the EMA and other unions know that, and Tony Aldous knows that.

I thought you should also be told.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN G. COLLIER,
Chairman, Nuclear Electric.

Sir,

I am writing to correct the impression which may have been given to your readers by your publication of part of a private letter from one of my colleagues to Nuclear Electric.

To claim to be quoted out of context is an old trick, second only to the oldest of all journalistic tricks of actually quoting out of context. Both are fair game for those who write or speak to a public audience. In this case you have not simply quoted part of a private letter out of context, but inevitably and more seriously out of the context of a series of exchanges both by letter and face to face.

We represent professional engineers, the great majority of whom work in potentially dangerous industries including the nuclear industry. In any discussion or negotiation, the safety implications of proposals from management concerning working practices or safety levels play an essential and significant part.

Where health and life may be at risk one key safeguard is always a well constructed work procedure related to safe manning levels and expertise, which is subject to robust debate and agreement rather than by imposition by management. This has always been the case in the nuclear industry. Because of the botched nature of the electricity supply privatisation the commercial pressures on companies like Nuclear Electric are greater than ever and it is not surprising that the nature of the debate reflects that.

Our commitment to safety in the nuclear industry is total. I know that goes for management also. We often have, and continue to have, disagreements about how that may be achieved, and at times such disagreements can and do become heated. That is as it should be with so much at stake, but such disagreements are part of the process designed to ensure a safe outcome. We would not hesitate to make public any decision which, despite extended consultation and negotiation we believed did actually compromise safety. We have never had to, and I am sure we never will have to.

Yours faithfully,
D.A. COOPER,
General Secretary, Engineers & Managers Association.

O·B·N

I thank everyone connected with this film — regardless of their motives or feelings — for attempting and accomplishing a unique work.

And I thank you, my readers — who wrote letters to me, the press, the studio, and the producers, who called to express your opinions, who came out in droves to my book signings to speak your hearts about this film, and about its casting and content.

Guys, you were great. You gave me to know that the book I'd written meant something to you. You gave me to know that Lestat, Louis and Claudia had a life in your minds, as well as in mine.

I wish every author could know the happiness you gave to me. I love you for it. And I hope and pray that I never let you down.

ANNE RICE (author of
Interview With A Vampire)
Advert in Empire magazine

Submitted by Alastair Baker

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

Round and about

Sir,

Am I right in thinking that EYE *862 represents the latest instalment in the "Grand* EYE *deliberate Winter Cock-Up series"? If so, I would like to claim my prize for spotting a reference to the as yet unwritten* EYE *864 in "Doing the Rounds".*

Unfortunately, I already have a subscription to PRIVATE EYE. *If I have won the prize, I would like to send it to my mother. Address to follow if requested.*

Like the previous winner, Tim Benbow of St Anthony's, I am a graduate student of the university. At Lincoln, we are known as "the sad bastards".

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS BERRY,
Lincoln College, Oxford.

Tooth picky

Sir,

What is it about satirists that prevents you from getting the name of our newspaper right? In the comic novel DROP THE DEAD DONKEY 2000 *we are referred to as the* BRECON & RADNOR CLARION. *In "Funny Old World" (*EYE *863), you call us the* BRECON & RADNOR ADVERTISER.

It is, of course, an honour, greater than any poncey press award, for a regional hack to have his false-teeth-up-the-bottom story ripped off by metropolitan sophisticates and given star treatment by one of the nation's most vital organs.

It's just that I'm sure it would greatly please our editor, the lovely Bridget MacLaughlin, if you could give the paper an accurate mention.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS WHITEHEAD,
Radnorshire Reporter, Brecon & Radnor Express.

State's evidence

Sir,

Almost everything you have ever written about me is untrue, and I expect that you care even less about that than I do. However, your latest mention ("Street of Shame") is so wrong that I would like to correct it:

While I hope to come home this autumn after two more years in the USA, this move is at my own request. What is more, I expect to be replaced.

You make two other mistakes. Washington is not our "last remaining foreign bureau" since we have a long-established office in New York. And my nickname is not "barking" but "bonkers". I earned this label long years ago, when I refused to join many of my fellow industrial correspondents in toadying to the clique of communist sympathisers which dominated labour reporting. I am now rather proud of it.

Yours faithfully,
PETER HITCHENS,
Washington Bureau, Daily Express.

Lookalike

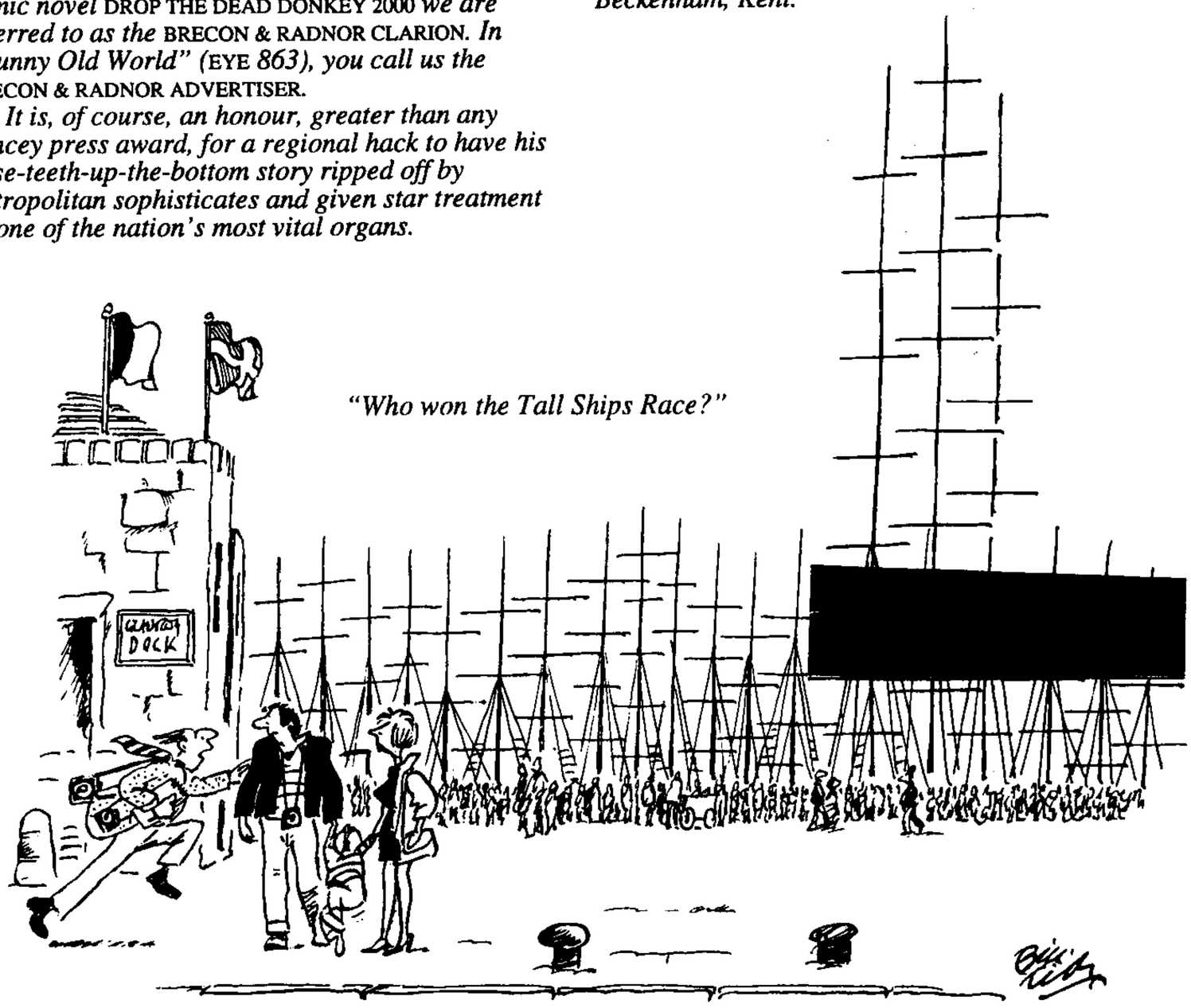
Saatchi

Costello

Sir,

Has anyone else noted the striking similarity between one-time Tory-saving advertising guru Maurice Saatchi and trendy left-wing songwriter Elvis Costello? Perhaps we should be told.

Yours sincerely
DAVID COTSON,
Beckenham, Kent.



"Who won the Tall Ships Race?"

I-SPY

Forest Hill, London SW

Submitted by Lawrence Frewin. £10 paid for similar submissions. ***(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)***

Cross purpose

Sir,

My congratulations to that bastard Cyclops, whoever he may be.

Having taken early retirement (at the age of 114½) I have decided to upgrade my reading by taking PRIVATE EYE *on a regular basis, instead of the spasmodic way in which I used to.*

In the past I have usually managed to complete the cryptic crosswords in the DAILY TELEGRAPH *and* DAILY EXPRESS. *Occasionally I have found a copy of the* TIMES *lying about, and have nearly completed its crossword when it has not been too arty-farty.*

But that bastard Cyclops is a different kettle of fish. I have not yet crawled into his mind. We are not on all fours. We are not, you might say, as it were, "ad idem".

But I can tell you this. I intend to plug away. I will get the sod.

And when I do I shall send you the completed PRIVATE EYE *Crossword, fully expecting to win the £100 prize.*

And you can tell that to Cyclops. So there.

Yours sincerely,
JAMES MARTIN,
Clayton-le-Woods, Lancs.

Sturm and Drang

Sir,

Hate, hate, hate. I've never known such hatred as can be found in your publication! And such targets you pick on, from Esther Rantzen to Lady Archer. Would it surprise you to know that some of these names are well respected beyond these shores?

I pride myself in speaking five languages well enough to grasp the idioms of European satire, but subtlety in your organ comes a poor second-place to rancour, sheer, unadulterated rancour!

When I first read your stories I saw how many ended "Cont. on page 94". Being a naïve foreigner I actually looked for "page 94". When I couldn't find it I took my copy back to the newsagent complaining that he'd sold me a truncated version. He too, luckily, was one of your readers and took time to explain how the phantom page was merely a metaphor for long-windedness! (If this page HAD existed I bet it too would be full of hatred). No, my opening-sentence is a lie, for as an undergrad at Heidelberg I read in the archives a satire magazine popular in the Germany of the 1930s called DER STURMER...

Yours,
EVI NOSIRAHK,
Crosby.

PS: Peter Cook was over-rated.

Continental shelf

Sir,

*Chris Daniels (*EYE *862) and his like should stop whinging. If you can't be bothered to search for your* EYE *(or are disgruntled with its position on the shelf) take out a subscription.*

Come to Prague, Mr Daniels, the EYE *doesn't. At least be grateful you* **can** *buy it off the shelf.*

Yours faithfully,
ANNE CAREY,
Prague, Czech Republic.

Soft option

Sir,

*I would like to assure your readers that there is at least one gay man who does not fancy Michael Portillo (*EYE *863). Given the choice, I would rather spend an evening with a whoopie cushion.*

Best wishes,
DAVID BAKER,
London.

Please address letters for publication to Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or e-mail to strobes@cix.compulink.co.uk (marked "For Publication"). Due to the overwhelming response, e-mail is unlikely to receive a reply.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"A win would be better than a draw."
DENIS LAW, ITV
(Charles Andrews)

"Hoddle by name, Hoddle by nature..."
COMMENTATOR, BBC1
(M.C. Hayden)

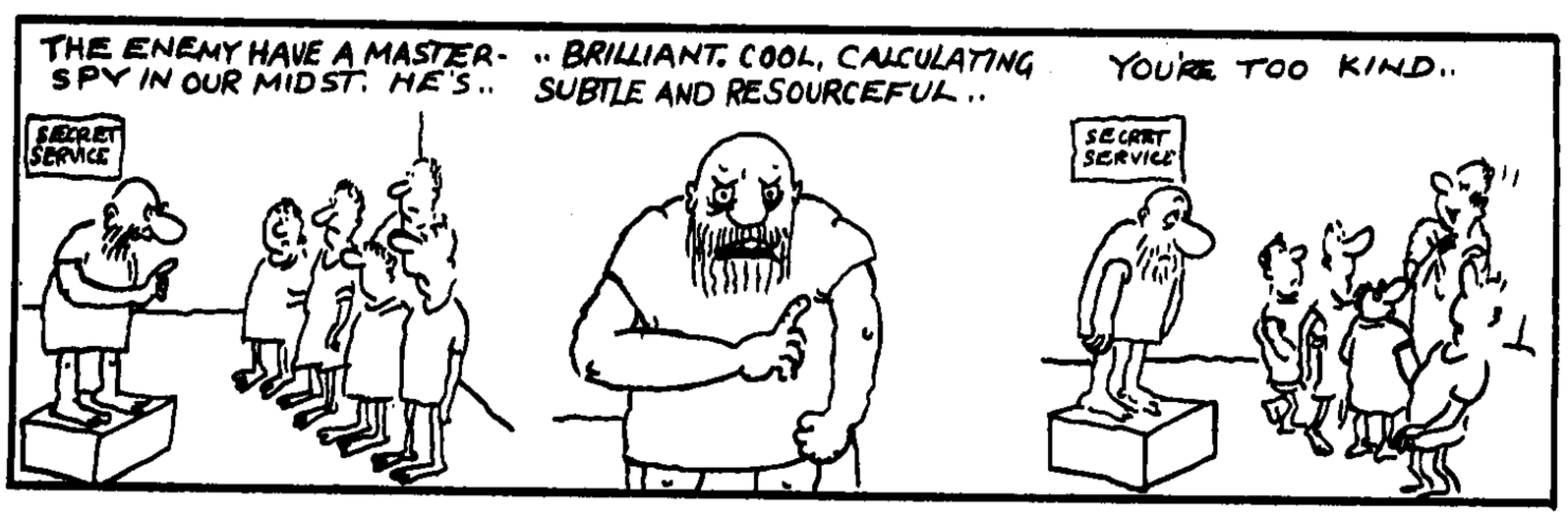
Presenter: *So, Ray, you're 37 years old now. Any thoughts about retiring?*
Ray Wilkins: *No, no. Nothing could be further from the back of my mind.*
GLR
(Guy Baker)

"He's caused the Chelsea defence no amount of problems."
JIMMY ARMFIELD, Radio 5
(Julian Thake)

"A game is not won until it is lost."
DAVID PLEAT, ITV
(John Lawson)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN


THE ENEMY HAVE A MASTER-SPY IN OUR MIDST. HE'S..
SECRET SERVICE
.. BRILLIANT. COOL, CALCULATING SUBTLE AND RESOURCEFUL..
YOU'RE TOO KIND..
SECRET SERVICE

SATANIC ABUSE

WHEN four sets of parents in the same street in Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, were accused of ritual child abuse last April the *Eye* suggested great care should be taken to avoid a repeat of the Orkney fiasco (*Eyes passim*), not to mention those in Rochdale and Cleveland.

Nine months later, after a £1 million investigation, the cases have been abandoned at the request of the prosecution on the day the accused were to go on trial.

When Orkney social workers abandoned their prosecutions their excuse was that they had been badly treated by the media. The prosecutions were unlikely to be successful thanks to bad publicity from "biased" reporters who had fatally damaged cases already described by Sheriff David Kelbie as, er, fatally flawed.

A pisspoor excuse, in other words — but better than anything available to prosecutors of the Bishop Auckland parents. The press has barely mentioned the cases, despite numerous reports of attacks on homes of the accused.

Why did the prosecution wait so long before abandoning the cases, thus causing maximum distress to the accused? They weren't living in a small Orkney village where the entire community knew them well and was able to rally round: they lived in a town where some thought it appropriate to assume their guilt and lob bricks through windows late at night. They are now talking of seeking compensation like the Orkney parents.

The worst aspect of the Bishop Auckland cases is that, as the *Eye* predicted, children who *have* been abused have suffered horrors in order to give evidence only to find their ordeal was all for nothing.

When a six-year-old girl claimed in August 1993 she had been abused by a 14-year-old boy, doctors found evidence of abuse. No evidence was found to support the accusations of a nine-year-old girl who also claims to have been abused. The boy denied the accusations until he appeared in court; he was placed in care.

In November 1993 the six-year-old alleged further abuse by the boy and a 12-year old boy said that he too had been abused; no evidence was found to support the latter allegation.

The following month saw the six-year-old girl and 12-year-old boy allege that they had been abused by a local married couple. The police and social workers then began a "major investigation".

Readers who followed the Orkney saga will be familiar with the rest of the story. Within a few weeks the children accused three other couples of abusing them during satanic rituals. The women allegedly wore witches' clothes, rats were allowed to gnaw on the children's bodies and they were told that if they did not comply they would be punished by the devil.

By now several other children had come into the picture, often giving contradictory evidence and including a seven-year-old girl who said she remembered being abused after talking to the other children. In mid-1994 four of the children said a doctor, a music teacher, a solicitor and one of the policemen involved with the investigation were involved in the abuse.

All of this was enough to persuade Knacker he had a rock-solid case and the accused couples were charged with indecent assault on children. Strangely, there is no record of charges being laid against the doctor, solicitor et al. They couldn't have been any less successful.

The upshot is that the determination of social workers to prove that satanic ritual abuse must have taken place somewhere, sometime, somehow — presumably in an attempt to justify the incompetence of those involved in previous attempts — is proving expensive. But Durham's social work chiefs don't intend to make the mistake of Orkney where the public inquiry cost £6 million: Durham is to hold a private inquiry and refuses to give assurances about making the findings public.

In any case such a report would only end up containing guidelines like those in the Orkney report... which were completely ignored by Durham's social workers.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "It was the filthy, foul-mouthed verbal assaults more than the actual violence that really upset my son," Martha Shear told reporters. It's not right that my seven-year-old should hear the Mighty Mouse, his favourite animal character, shouting at him: 'I'm going to kick the fucking crap out of you, you little bastard.'

"Mrs Shear described the incident which occurred outside the Chuck E. Cheese pizza

parlour. "I invited my son's friends there for his birthday party, because Chuck E. Cheese — the Mighty Mouse — usually puts on such a good show for the children on the lawn outside. Michael's at that curious age, so he sneaked up on Chuck during the show and yanked the head off his costume. It was naughty, but didn't merit what happened next. The old guy inside the costume grabbed my son, said he'd had enough of crap like him, threw him onto a wooden bench, and started kicking the living daylights out of him in front of the other kids. I screamed at Chuck to stop, but he just kept jumping up and down on my boy. In the end, it took four short order chefs to pull him off, and now Michael's in hospital with concussion. After all that, the guy went into his fire-eating routine and tried to set himself alight." *(Washington Post, 23/5/94. Spotter — Peter Vickery)*

— ● —

● "The Three Principles of the Original Kleptonian Neo-American Church are 1) Psychedelic substances, such as LSD and cannabis, are religious sacraments. 2) The use of psychedelic sacraments is a basic human right. 3) Only those familiar with the solipsist-nihilist epistemological reasoning of David Hume and Nagarjuna are considered ready and prepared to ingest the sacraments.

"The higher clergy of the OKNeoAC consists of Board of Toad members and boo hoo generals. A boo hoo general may make whatever rules he or she likes, may excommunicate members they have accepted, and defrock clergypersons they have ordained within their vortices. The Amylum may confirm, revoke or annul such actions in a gruntled or disgruntled mode. A further appeal may be made to the regnant monarch in perpetuity for so it is deemed.

"Any person who questions my veracity is lower than filthy swine and one can only hope such creatures will be 'hosed down' to protect our fragile environment from further pollution. On the other hand, I am not infallible. The excommunication of Michael Ryland over the rubber incident is hereby annulled, and his membership in His Eminence Glenn Macbeth's vortex as a SPIN knight conspiracy analyst, senior grade, is confirmed.

"Tetrahydrocannibol genes into the DNA of all fruit and vegetables now!" *([Edict from] The Divine Toad of Sweat, Austin, Texas, 1/8/94. Spotter — Private Eye)*

— ● —

● *"I know that, strictly speaking, you're not supposed to park on a zebra crossing," Ronald Moore told Hastings magistrates, "but I can explain everything. It would never have happened if I hadn't run myself over in my own care the previous day."*

Moore, 67, of Winceby Close, Bexhill-on-Sea, explained the circumstances leading up to the offence: "My automatic garage doors wouldn't open, so I got out of the car to open them manually. My artificial leg became stuck in a drain grating and,. unfortunately, I'd forgotten to put the hand brake on, and the car began rolling towards me. I was knocked over, fell under the car, my artificial leg came off and was crushed, and my good leg was trapped under the offside front wheel. I began singing loudly to attract attention, but it was several hours before I was rescued.

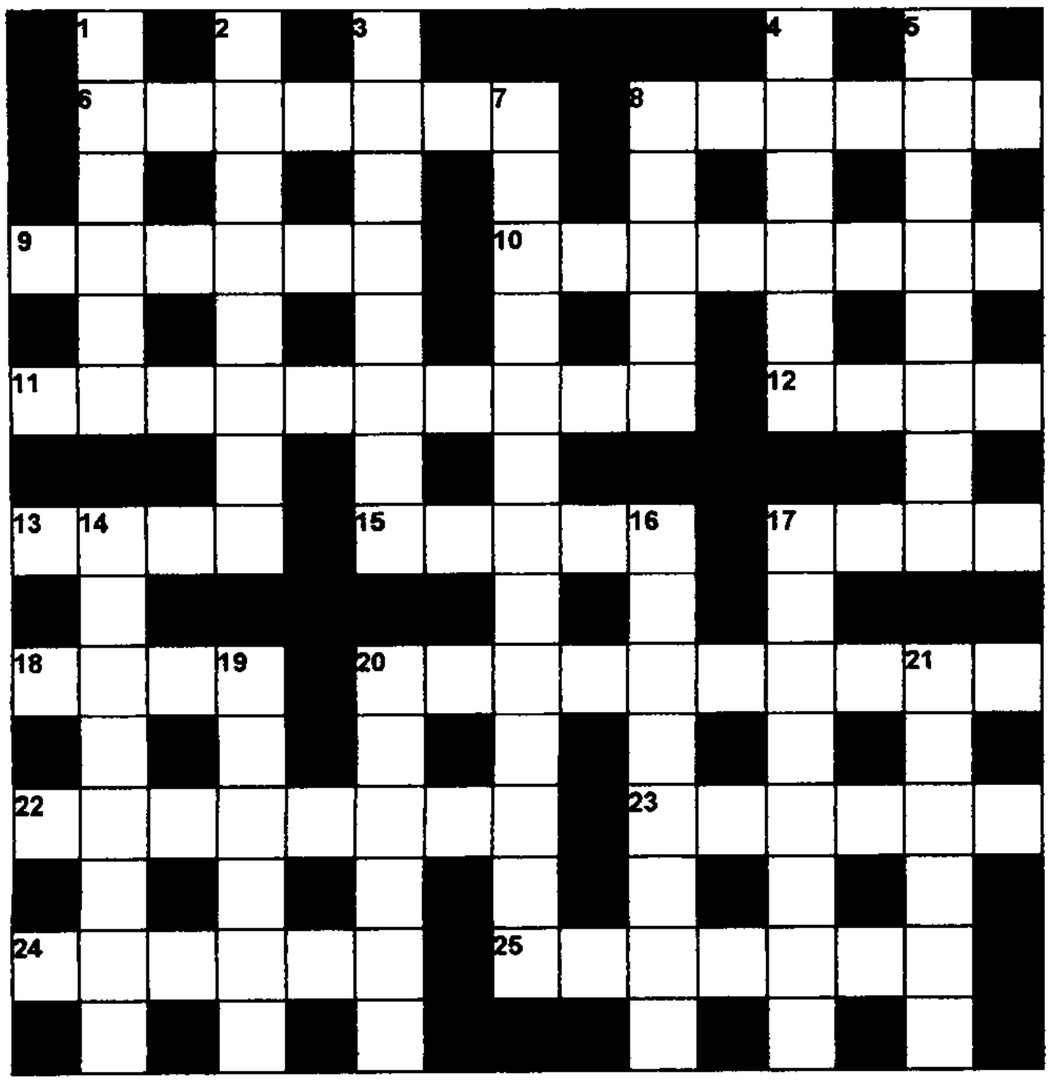
"Next day, I could hardly walk because my good leg was bruised, and my artificial leg was all bent into a U shape. The leg repair shop is in the centre of town, and that's why I parked on the zebra crossing. I've got arthritis and I fought in the war, you know." Mr Moore was given an absolute discharge. (Bexhill-on-Sea Observer, 24/6/94. Spotter — Anon.)

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

EYE CROSSWORD 20 by Cyclops

£100 Winner PATRICK WILKES



ACROSS

6/20d Heckler taken out (name concealed) by government bully-boy (7,6)
8 Miss this West End show! (6)
9 Undercover items? Just about the last thing you'll find in our mag (6)
10 Norma's around to check final diary entry as a rule (8)
11 Jay mostly pisses 'em off (see some of our back issues) (4,6)
12 Some very obscene *Eye* feature (4)
13 Such a little thing, but one randy Persian, perhaps (4)
15 Understood Bill's in Bristol (5)
17 However, if second's included it's a pair (4)
18 Heseltine's gutless nazi (4)
20 Brighteyes singularly intellectual? (6,4)
22 One getting poor Norma in a state, as seen on tv (8)
23 Feeling randy and mounting ex-PM (no hard on though) (2,4)
24 Knight needs scrutiny we hear — he wanted socialism with a human face (6)
25 Far from sober style in a leader (7)

DOWN

1 One member gobbled by broadcaster is inadequate (6)
2 Embodiment of a country's relations with a Frenchman (5,3)
3 The latest throwaway tv transmission... (8)
4 ... a pisspoor discussion show to almost top 'Hattersley' (6)
5 All over the place, these 'E' dropping yobs — they get good commission (8)
7 House to hush-hush Ray's philandering — will he never resign? (4,9)
8 Practice of surgeons/medics leaders (1,3,1)
14 Seat of foreign government in which shaky Heath gets the sweats and drops one (3,5)
16 They're sending an unwelcome message to Major — perhaps he'll stop (3,5)
17 Runner takes awful shit from the Dalai Lama (8)
19 To snog Sweden's premier, hang about (6)
20 (see 6)
21 Fashionable couplings when Charles is about (6)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 03.02.95. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 19

ACROSS: 7 Polo 8 Propaganda 9/16 National Lottery 10 Digger 11 Bondi 12 Skid Row 14 Commons 16 (See 9) 19 Dunkirk 21 Angst 23 Scribe 25 Abortion 26 Redundancy 27 (See 8).

DOWN: 1 Royal blood 2 Motion 3 Jobless 4 Gandhi 5 Margaret 6 Idle 8/27 Pension fund 13 Worsthorne 15 Monsieur 17 Oratory 18 Ukraine 20 Imelda 22 Get off 24 Cher.

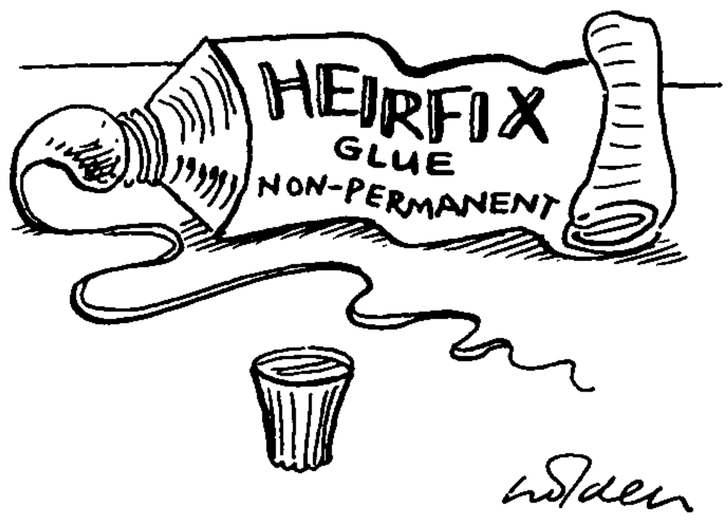
The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

Today I decided to have a historic press conference to unveil my plans for winning the next election. "What are they?" asked my press adviser Mr Meyer. "That is your job," I told him. "I cannot be expected to do everything". A few hours later he came in with a piece of paper on which he had written the following ideas:

1. Labour is hopelessly divided over Europe.
2. Their policy on rail privatisation is embarrassing.
3. Er...
4. Vote Conservative.

The press conference was a great success. Lots of famous journalists were there and after I had explained how well the government was doing, some of them even asked questions. One asked: "If the government is doing so well, why has your poll rating fallen to 2 per cent?" I immediately replied, quick as a flash: "The Royal Family are the glue that holds the nation together." I could see they were very surprised by this brilliant answer, which I had thought up earlier when I was in Ryman's purchasing some new notebooks. I had noticed how many different types of glue there were, i.e. UHU, Pritstik, Loctite, Bostik and many others. I thought how important glue was, and I remember how in the



old days we used Gripfix to mend the gnomes when their heads fell off. For some reason Terry does not mention this in his famous book, as many of the ones which broke were made by him, i.e. not very well. Anyway, it was very clever of me to mention the Queen, as it made the journalists forget about Mrs Gorman, who has now got a notebook all of her own called "Bastards (Female)", along with the woman I do not mention, which is why Mrs Gorman is the only one in it.

Tuesday

Today is another historic day, as my enemy Mr Monsieur Delors has finally resigned from running Europe. I have been working towards this for five years, and now a very different man has replaced him, i.e my new friend Mr Monsieur Santer. He supports all my policies, as he made clear in his opening speech. "Mesdames and messieurs," he said. "Vive la nouvelle Europe. Vive le federalisme. Vive l'ecu. A bas cette prat gris Anglais, avec ses idées stupide de subsidiarité. Pah! Merde. Vive la France. Deutschland über alles." I admit that I did not understand every word of this, as I do not have O-level French like Mr Hurd, who I asked to translate the bits I didn't understand, i.e. all of it. Mr Hurd told me that speech "lost a lot in translation", but that there was nothing very new in it and it marked no shift in our policy.

Wednesday

The papers have got it wrong as usual. They are all trying to make out that Mr Santer was somehow being rude about me in his speech. This just goes to show that they do not speak French as well as Mr Hurd! The Labour people pathetically tried to use this in the House of Commons, asking me whether I still "believed in Santer". "Of course I do," I said. "He is the glue that binds Europe together, just like the Queen." That stopped Labour laughing, until they started again. But I wasn't finished yet. When I turned over the next page of my ringbinder, there was another of my brilliant jokes written by my special new jokewriter, Mr James. "If they mention Santer," he told me, "try this one." So I did. "Perhaps the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition could tell us at this point whether he still believes in Santer Clause 4?" All our side thought this was the most brilliant joke they had ever heard, and Mr Ryder stood up holding a card which said: "Laugh again or I shall withdraw the whip." The cheering and clapping went on for a not inconsiderable number of minutes, and in my judgement it was my greatest triumph ever in the House of Commons.

Thursday

Today I had another amazing triumph when I won the great fish debate by a huge majority, i.e. 3. All the papers had been predicting that I would lose, thanks to the Bastards and Loonies, i.e. Mrs Gorman and Sir Richard Body who is the one who has been let out of a mental hospital under my Community Care policy. I told Mr Waldegrave to say that the government would now pay millions of pounds to our fishermen to stay at home watching TV, so that the Spanish could catch all the fish around the shores of Britain. That kept most of our people happy, and then to make sure of winning the vote I sent a message to my friends the Ulster Unionists. "If you keep my government in power," I said, "I'll see you right, and

furthermore I give you my solemn assurance that any Catholic fish caught crossing the border into Ulster will be immediately extradited." No wonder we won. The Bastards and Loonies are no match for me. If I want to surrender to Europe I will not be defeated by my own side. Oh no.

Friday

My new National Lottery is going extremely well and we now have a very considerable amount of money to give to worthy causes. Mr Clark asked if the Conservative Party could have some of it but I had to say no. "My own top priority is to encourage young people to be more competitive at games," I said. "That's a good idea," said Mr Portfolio as he and Mr Heseltine raced the length of the Cabinet Room to see who could get to my chair first.

Sunday

My idea of competition seems to be catching on. Mr Blair went on television trying to imitate me by giving an interview to my friend Sir David Frost (who I gave a knighthood to because he is my friend).

My wife Norman and I watched Mr Blair at home and Norman said: "He is nearly as boring as you" — i.e. I was the best. To celebrate this new competitive victory I had another bowl of Banana Bubbles, which are now my favourite cereal. Oh yes.

Mr Blair was particularly unimpressive on the subject of Clause Four. He got really flustered as Mr Frost kept asking him more and more questions which he could not answer.

"No one that stupid could ever win an election," I said after drinking the banana-flavoured milk left after you have eaten the cereal (which is in my judgement why this cereal is in no small measure superior to other cereals).

Norman gave me one of her funny looks.

FLINTSTONE NEWS

20,000 BC, Friday Price: 2 Tusks

NEW PAINTINGS DISAPPOINT

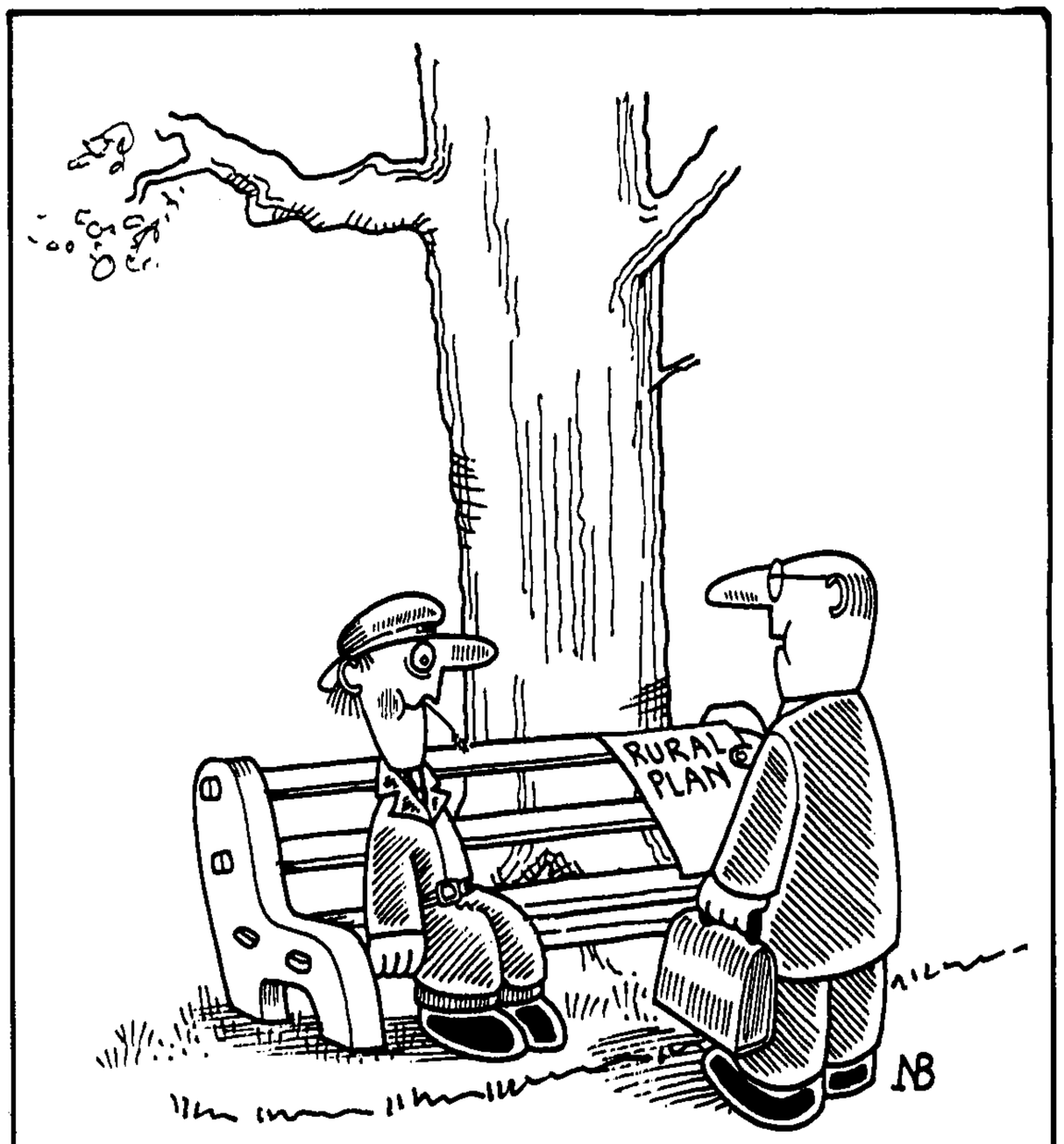
by Our Art Staff
Brian Pseudocriticus

A DISMAL new show has opened at the Cave Gallery in the Ardèche which once again highlights the paucity of the contemporary art scene.

Dull daubs in ochre and red with crude black outlines have been rendered directly onto the wall, with no thought for shape, design of composition — images are even superimposed one on top of the other.

The same dreary menagerie of mammoth, bison and tiger is trotted out by an artist rightly withholding his signature. There is nothing new here and we have seen it all before at Lascaux, Les Eyzies and all the other over-praised Dordogne caves.

How we yearn for the work of Van Gog, Rembrog, or Michaelangelog *(continued for centuries).*



"We're doing away with village idiots, but urban idiots will be available in shopping centres and supermarkets"

A Doctor writes

AS a doctor, I am often asked: "Doctor, are you a genius?"

The simple answer is "yes".

© *World copyright A. Dr J. Miller*

The Daily Hellograph

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 1995

Hugh Grant makes speech at Awards Ceremony

by Our Man In Hollywood William Kosher of the Spectator

THE STAR of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, the dashing Hugh Grant, had the whole of America enthralled and delighted as his typical English charm won them over once again.

His acceptance speech at the prestigious Academy of Cinematographic Artistry Awards (known as "the Balls") had his American audience reaching for their dictionaries to try and make sense of what this quintessential English actor was talking about. His debonair good looks and giveaway... casual... typically English... modest understatement... self-deprecation... war in Chechnia (*shurely shome mishtake? Ed.*)

That Grant speech in full

Er...I say... Good Evening... Jolly decent of you all... er... thank you very much...

Very big picture of Hugh Grant for our younger readers

ON OTHER PAGES

Liz Hurley hundreds of new pics pages 7,8,9 More Weddings & Funerals – Court & Social page p.22

Queen's calves may end up as veal

Daily Telegraph

THE TIMES

FRIDAY JANUARY 27 1995

Civil War in Saatchnia worsens

BY OUR REALLY IMPORTANT STORY STAFF KATE ADS

REBEL forces in the strife-torn capital of Saatchnia were today digging in against a counter-attack by forces loyal to the former Saatchni regime. Fierce battles have been raging in the boardroom, corridors and wine bars around the besieged headquarters of the self-styled President of the Saachnis and writs have been raining down like mortars on rival combatants.

I have seen grown men weeping over their sacked comrades and women wandering about in a daze, trying to find loved ones who have been given large redundancy payments.

"The world cannot just stand by and watch Saatchnia fall apart," said one 21-year-old account executive I met, who was clearly suffering from post-lunch-stress disorder. "Surely Saatchnia deserves better than this?"

Meanwhile the long queues of refugees heading out of the Saatchni warzone tell their own story.

Said one elderly fat man with a cigar, who would only give his name as 'Lord King': "We cannot stay. It is not safe here for the British Airways account any more. It is a tragedy."

Only one question remains as Saatchnia descends into a living hell in front of the averted eyes of the international community. "What on earth is a story about admen doing on the front pages of national newspapers?"

Crème de la Crème Advertising

Major Television Company requires Director

Anglia Television is looking to replace a senior member of the Board. Applicants should be totally unknown and ideally not married to a famous novelist.

The applicant should not have access to a fax and should not have spoken to her husband for several years.

Salary negotiable (but does not include huge payoffs for Kurds, etc).

National Newspaper requires EDITOR

The Grauniad is looking for a new editor. Candidates should ideally not belong to the KGB or be in the habit of forging faxes from Members of Parliament. Anyone considered. Spelling not essential. *(Candidates with sense of humour need not apply.)*

The Alternative Rocky Horror Service Book

No. 94. A Service Of Commination On The National Lottery

Bishop *(for it is he)*: O Lord, who said "Whenever two or three are gathered together, they are likely to be queuing for a lottery ticket", deliver us from the temptation of £18 million.

All: Are you sure you meant that? You could do a lot with £18 million.

Bishop: O ye of little faith, I beseech ye to abjure the National Lottery and all its works. For it is an abomination unto the Lord, even though a proportion of the proceeds has been set aside for charitable and artistic purposes.

All: Like sick kiddies and the opera house.

Bishop: Very true. We will now sing the first verse of Cole Porter's stirring hymn, 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?'.

All: We do.

There will then be a reading from the Book of Numbers: "14-44-31-21-6-4."

All: And what is this week's bonus number?

Bishop: It is 13.

All: Damn. We've lost again. You are right. It is a real waste of money.

Bishop: Did I not tell you so?

At this point there shall be another reading, from the Epistle of Camelot to the Church of England.

Dear Bishop:
Do you want some money to mend your roof? Support the lottery and it could be you!

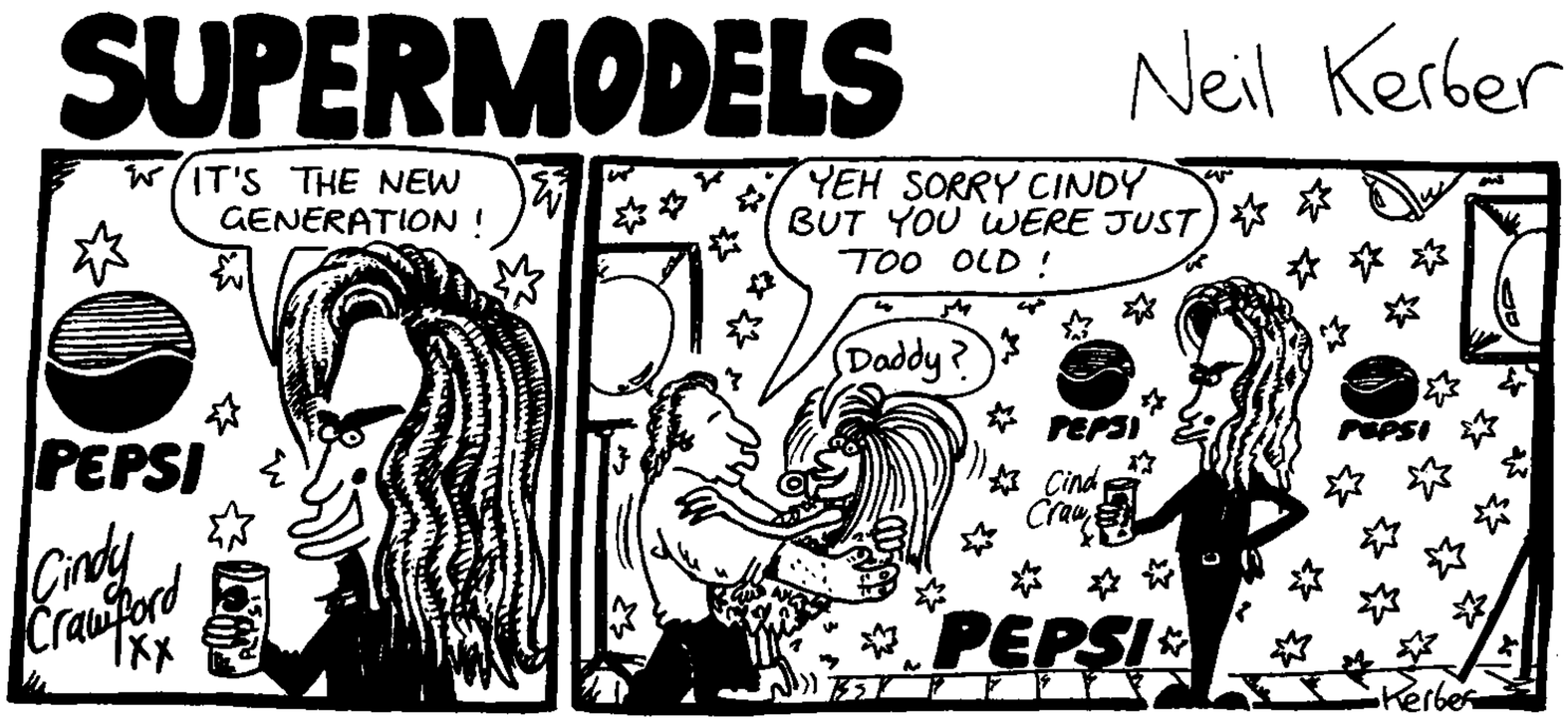
Bishop: Alright, you win. Tickets will be on sale in the vestry after this service.

THE DISMISSAL

Bishop: Depart in hope.

All: Thanks be to greed.

© Carealot plc



This year's concert, which comes from the Old Imperial Riding School, is hosted by Tim Rice and stars Charles Aznovoice, Placido Domingo and Sissel Krykjebo,

Sunday Times

CHANNEL ONE 9.00 Nine to Five 2.30 The Roux Brothers. Shellfish, plus recipes for crap and mussels

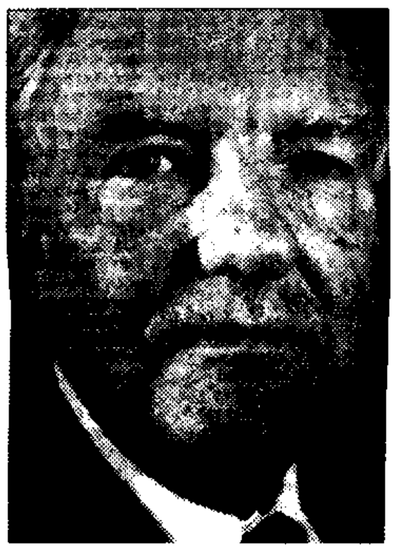
Evening Standard

All the old familiar faces are here, and most of the new familiar faeces too: Pope, Pound, Lamb, Swift, Larkin and Lear.

The Times

A Taxi Driver writes

Every week a well-known cab driver is asked to give his views on an issue of topical importance.



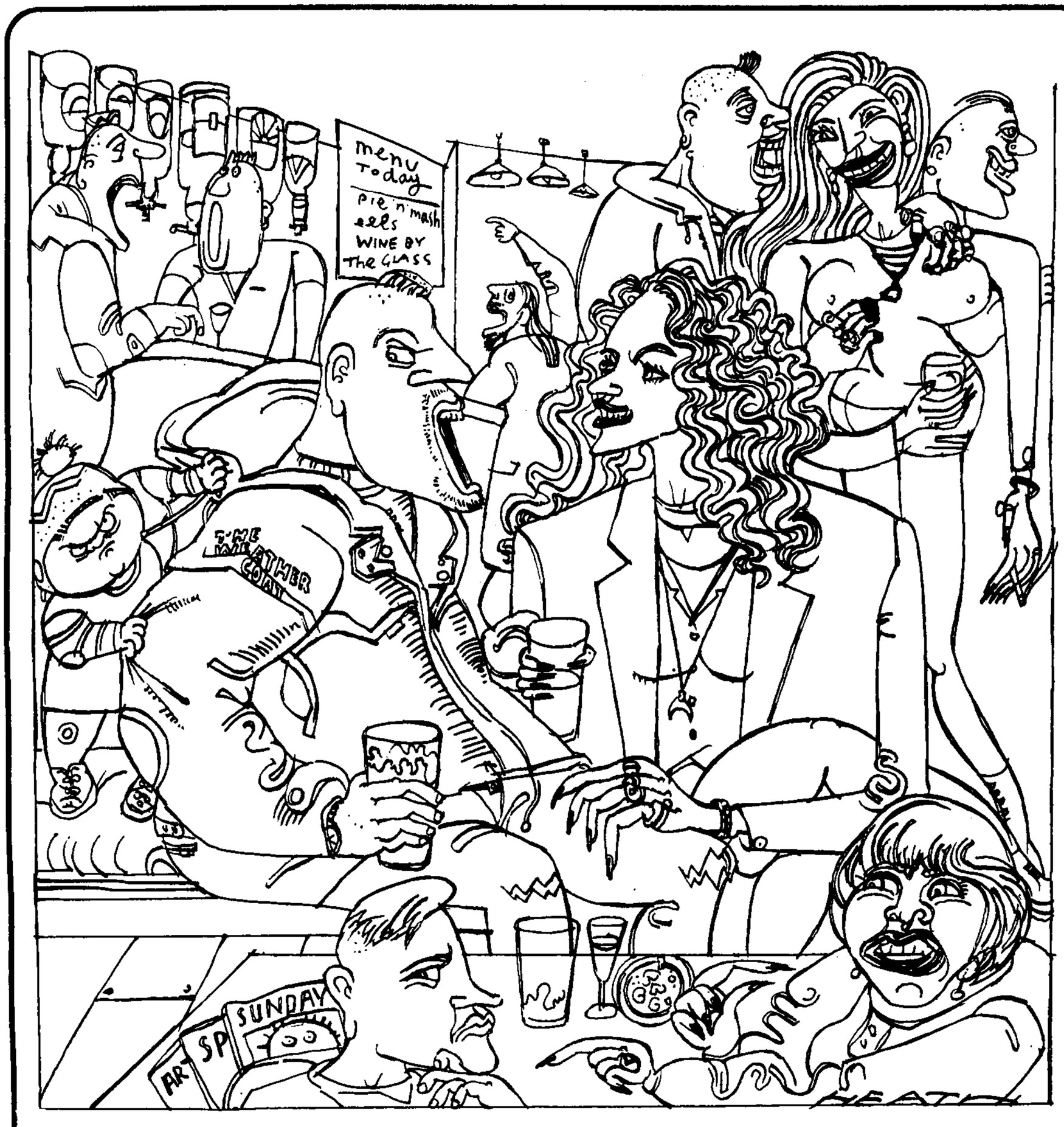
This week: Paul Nutter (Cab no. 666)

Blimey, he's hopeless, isn't he, guv? John Major? Don't make me laugh. Did you see that press conference? What did he think he was doing? Taking the piss, or what? My kiddy could have done better than that. Know what I think, guv? Best thing they can do is bring back Maggie. She'd soon sort them out. She was a proper leader, not like this one they've got in now. I tell you, mate. me and all the blokes on the rank reckon there's only one thing to do with him. String 'im up. It's the only language people like him understand.

I 'ad that Lord Keith Joseph in the back of the cab once. Now he was a real gent. Made a lot of sense too. Traffic's terrible, isn't it? You'd be quicker walking. That'll be fifteen quid.

(This cab driver appears by kind permission of the Daily Mail)

NEXT WEEK: Richard Littlejohnson.



Great Bores Of Today.

"... it's disgusting apparently it's got every depravity known to man in one play rape masturbation micturition and frottage apparently and people are walking out in droves particularly after this woman sucks this man's eyes out and then rapes him or is it the other way around? I mean the Royal Court is well known for its controversial drama but this is the worst ever apparently there's metrication and frontage and stimulatio people have fainted and had to be carried out the writer is only 23 you wonder where she learnt all this stuff imbroglio and desiderata which apparently they do after the soldier comes back and they put him in the floorboards and then they tremulate all over him it's all there it's absolutely disgusting what they get away with and the really sick thing is that people pay to see it amazing Julian and I are going on Thursday..."

The Observer gets a Scoop

LUVVIES

When I spoke to Mike Newell, he said that before he started shooting *Adventure* he'd been thinking, oh God, I'm going to work with Alan Rickman, I must be on my best behaviour. He's so choosy, how can I ever live up to the fact that he's chosen me?

ALAN RICKMAN

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession.

£10 paid for entries

VALET'S REVELATIONS SHOCK WORLD

by Our Domestic Staff
P.G. Wodehouse

THE REPUTATION of one of Britain's leading aristocrats was in tatters yesterday following the publication of sensational details of his private life by his former manservant.

The Hon. Bertram Wooster, 172nd in line to the throne, is revealed in the News of the World to be a character far removed from the suave, sensible man of taste that he presents to the world.

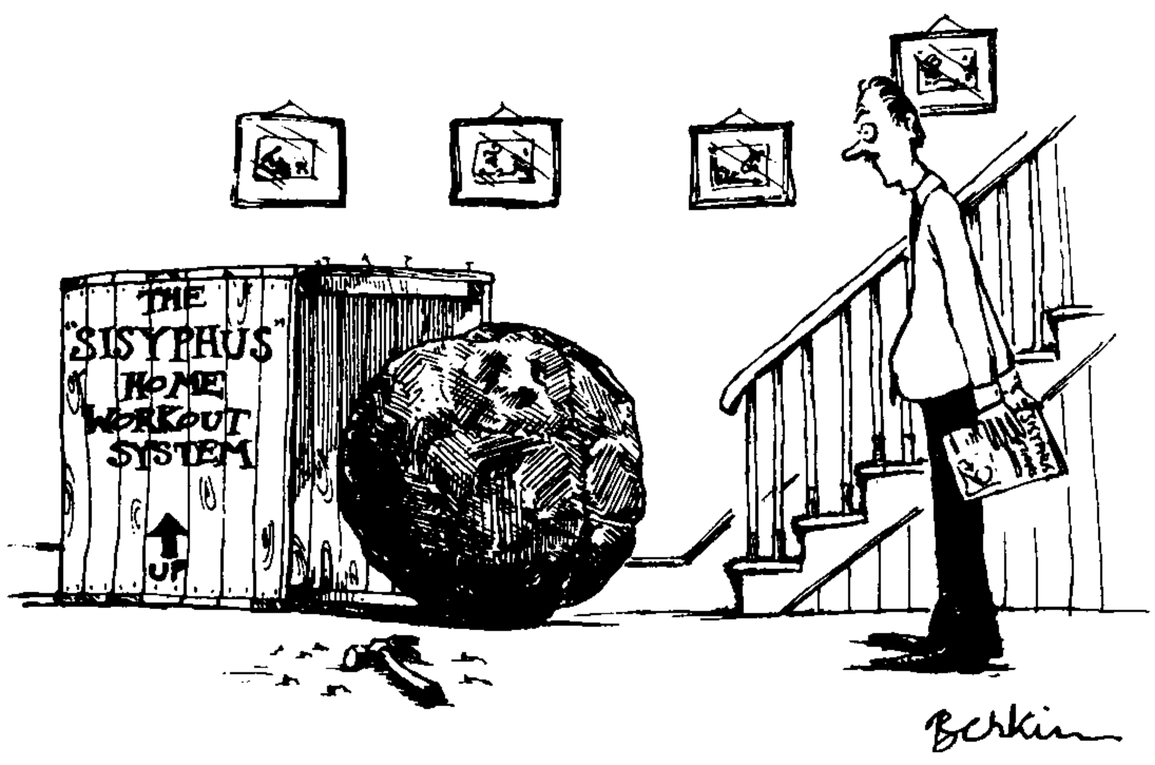
The valet, a Mr Jeeves, told News of the World reporters that "Bertie" was in fact a frivolous, selfish, dimwitted fool who was prone to bouts of heavy drinking, childish behaviour and emotional immaturity with regard to the opposite sex.

Jeeves recounts how Wooster:

- **Once knocked off a policeman's helmet when paralytically drunk on Boat Race night.**
- **Was terrified of his Aunt Agatha and would do anything to appease her.**
- **Repeatedly got engaged to young women, none of whom he had the remotest intention of marrying.**
- **Deliberately stole a silver cow creamer and subsequently denied it.**
- **Grew a moustache against everyone's advice and then had to shave it off.**
- **Continually bad-mouthed Gussie Fink-Nottle and other members of the Drones Gentlemen's Club behind their backs.**
- **Expected Jeeves to get him out of trouble at any time of day or night.**
- **Rogered Camilla Parker-Bowles in the shrubbery** *(shurely 'kissed Madeleine Basset in the conservatory'? Ed).*

A spokesman for Mr Wooster said that the former gentleman's gentleman had made Wooster look like "a footling ninny" and suggested that Jeeves would now be as welcome at his establishment as "a pair of brown shoes at a chap's funeral — i.e. not very welcome at all, if you get my drift".

But an unrepentant Jeeves replied: "With the greatest of respect to my erstwhile employer Mr Wooster I felt I could no longer tolerate continuing in his service. As the poet Horace so wryly observed: 'Give us the cash, Mr Murdoch.' "



BLAIR'S NEW POLICY SHOCK

by Our Blair Staff
Smiles Kington

THE LEADER of the Labour Party, Mr Tony Blair, made a controversial speech last night outlining his new policy on having policies.

"Some people in this party have accused me of having no policies at all.

"This could not be further from the truth. I do have one policy, and that is to conceal what my policies are. Except for the one I've just revealed. Damn. Now everyone knows."

The Tories were quick to attack Mr Blair for his admission that he had a no-policy policy. Said one leading Conservative: "We don't have any policies either. But in our case it is not a matter of policy. It is purely incompetence."

Mr Alastair Campbell is in the soup.

Peter *McLie*

The World's Worst Columnist*

WILL Camilla ever divorce her husband? I doubt it. Many married couples manage to live separate lives without too much fuss. So why not Camilla and her soldier-husband? Indeed, I would go so far as to bet that these two sensible people will be together well into the next century! Isn't marriage grandy and dandy?!

YOU DON'T see much of David Attenborough on the TV these days do you? Personally I always enjoyed his *Animal Magic* programmes. But I reckon it's time he changed his tack and turned his gaze to the fascinating world of plants. And here's a title for his new series — Coronation Street.

I AM now in Venice for a wee winter break, but as soon as I arrived there were these terrible floods! The streets are full of water and the people are reduced to travelling around in boats. Yet there is nothing about it in the papers! Aren't the Italians extraordinary folk?

Next time I shall go to Japan for a bit of peace and quiet.

**apart from Norman Tebbit*

Poetry Corner

In Memoriam Lord Kagan

So. Farewell then
Lord Kagan.

Gannex raincoat king and
Friend of
Lord Wislon.

"Not guilty."
That was your catchphrase.

But you
Were.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

"This is the police. Evenin' all. Mind how you go!"

LA DAME —AUX— CAMILLAS

***A new saga from the pen of SYLVIE KRIN, authoress of* Heir of Sorrows *and* Love in the Saddle.**

CAMILLA looked into the gilt-edged mirror, with its inscription "To Mrs Parker-Knoll, from the officers and men of the 17/31st Queen's Own Vets, Singapore 1/3/59".

How long ago it seemed that her husband's regiment had presented it to her on Ladies' Night. The heat of that tropical evening. The white-robed *bamigboys* bringing in the ice-cold rum frostrups on silver salvers...

And how things had changed.

She tentatively allowed her finger to explore the lines round her eyes.

"Laughter lines", Charles had called them. But recently, it seemed, he had given her precious little to laugh about.

Her marriage was over. She had become a public laughing-stock. And she could not even leave her beloved 18th century Wiltshire mansion, Placket Grange, without running the gauntlet of hundreds of evil-smelling journalists.

She even knew them by name now. There was "Reg", with the whisky breath, from the Sun. "Eddie", with the whisky breath, from the Mirror. "Quentin", with the whisky breath, from the Independent.

And then there was the worst of them all — the balding man from the Mail with the flared trousers, who was always pretending that he knew them. What did they call him? "Dumper"? "Dumpstrain"? Something like that.

How long would she have to endure this lonely nightmare? A prisoner in her own home. Would no one rescue her? Would her prince never come...?

THE PHONE trilled by the bedside. Automatically her hand went out. "Charles, hullo, is that you?" "No, it's Peter Costelotte here." At once she recognised the silken tones of the senior partner of London's oldest-established divorce lawyers, Costelotte & Lose of Paternoster Row.

"The other side has been most co-operative, Mrs Parker-Knoll. The decree nisi sailed through in jiffy. You, of course, can go on living in the house until it is sold. We were very fortunate that the, er, co-respondent, His... er... Royal... you know..."

The elderly lawyer coughed nervously, as if afraid to mention the true author of all his client's miseries.

In the pregnant silence, Camilla's gaze strayed to the photograph in its silver frame by the bedside. There he was, in his polo kit, laughing casually, with the hand-written message: "To Gladys from her ever-loving Neddy (Seagoon)."

"... what I mean, of course, is that we were very lucky that the third party in question made a full and frank admission of his adultery on national television."

From outside in the park, as dusk fell, came the drunken chanting of the hacks. "Come on, Horseface, get your tits out for the lads..."

Camilla shuddered with distaste and drew the curtains. To think that a few fleeting moments of happiness under that *Flowering Tampaxia* at Highgrove had brought her to such humiliation.

Truly she had paid the price.

"Of course," continued the suavely spoken lawyer, "the price of your house should help to take care of the little matter of our fees. As to your future maintenance, I think we can say that the way is now clear for you to contract another, er, marital arrangement, should you of course so desire. Ahem. May I, madam, wish you the very best of fortune in your new life? And may I humbly remind you that you have 30 days to pay our bill before interest is incurred."

The line went dead. Camilla slowly replaced the receiver.

"Yes," she thought. Perhaps the lawyer was right. Perhaps she would now be able to start again. In spite of the odd wrinkle here and there, she was not that old.

She still dressed well. At least her friends told her so. Elegant, was the word used by her hairdresser, Monsieur Kevin of "Uppercut" in Chippenham.

Surely the path was now clear for Charles to follow her example? After all, it was two years since he and his neurotic bride had formally separated.

Besides, attitudes had changed. It was quite acceptable now. Not like in the days of Edward the Fox and Mrs Simpson.

Everyone got divorced nowadays. Why, even the Archbishop of Canterbury did it. Or was it his children?

Her hopes soared like the sap rising in an old rose bush, as a long hard winter gives way to the first warming rays of spring sunshine. And could there be the distant promise of summer, and an Abbey wedding?

Flags being waved by the little children at the roadside. Street parties. A special stamp from the GPO. The smiling face of her regal mother-in-law graciously welcoming her at last into the bosom of her family.

"You were always the one we hoped he would marry."

Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong. A thousand church bells sounded their message of rejoicing in Camilla's excited reverie...

...Tring, tring, tring tring. It was only the phone again.

"Hello, is that Mr Costelotte?" she answered expectantly.

"No, it's me, Charles," said that familiar voice, which at once set her heart pounding. "Look, darling, I can't be long, I've got one of my Trust meetings, but I've been thinking about... er... us..."

Her legs turned to jelly. "Us?" she breathed, hardly daring to imagine what he was about to say next.

"Yes, well, I think we'd better put a bit of a lid on the whole thing. These polls in the Sun and the Star. It seems the public just aren't ready for, you know, you and me as an item."

Camilla sank onto the bed. Her world was once again in tatters.

"Does that mean, Charles," she stuttered, "that I'll never see you again?"

"No, of course not. I expect I'll still be popping round now and again for a spot of you-know-what. Ha, ha ha."

His hollow laughter hung on the air.

FROM the lawn outside there was the sound of voices raised in excitement. "Here, lads, look at these family snaps I've just nicked from the piano in the drawing room. There's one of her, starkers. She's only three, but it's her alright." "Brilliant!" a chorus of voices answered. "Hold the front page."

Camilla gazed once again into the mirror. The face that stared back at her seemed to have aged a hundred years.

© *Alexander Dumas*

Nigel Dumpster Mail Diary

Fergie for One FM

■THE DUCHESS of York is to become a disc jockey on the popular music station One FM, I can reveal. Sarah starts next month at an honorarium of around £6 million a year.

Her new boss Matthew Bannister, a third cousin of Anthony Bearer-Bryer, deputy assistant equerry to the Duke of Gloucester, tells me that she will broadcast every weekday morning from 9am on the station, which is of course named after Fortnum and Mason's.

Liz makes five!

■ELIZABETH Hurley, the star of the smash hit film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, is to marry her co-star, I can exclusively report.

"Yes it's true, how ever did you find out? Liz plans to slip away over Easter," a close friend tells me. "She and Simon have had so much publicity over the past year and just want a quiet wedding somewhere in the Caribbean."

I understand that the happy couple are anxious to start a family, and Shakespearean actor Simon, who once appeared on stage with the Princess of Wales's friend Lord Olivier Hoare, has already put their first-born's name down for Eton, which has educated generations of Callow youth, no pun intended! I wish Liz, 31, and Simon well.

Helena's "friend"

PS HELENA Bonham-Carter, whose family founded the Sotheby's auction house, has a new admirer. I understand that the star of Kenneth Branagh's Dracula (who was erroneously linked by some of my downmarket rivals to her director) is being escorted by debonair Home Secretary Michael Howard. There is, of course, a link between Michael, one of the cabinet's few success stories and widely tipped as the next prime minister, and nubile Helena, 17. His grandfather Harold "Howie" Howard was at Stowe with Gerald Smyth-Corona, the older brother of Helena's brother Peregrine's godfather Barry Smyth-Corona, the well-known Persian rug dealer. Small world indeed! Helena and Michael have been seen discretely sharing canapés at ministerial receptions, and my spies tell me that romance is in the air. Michael previously squired both Nastasja Kinski and Libby Purves, and Helena was previously involved with actors Kenny Branarh [Adam: you'll need to check the name, the cutting's a bit unclear I'm afraid — ND] and Pierce Brosnan. I'll keep you posted.

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STORM OVER BBC'S 'CLASSIC DRAMA' SHOCKER

by Our TV Staff
Edith Whartsonthetellytonight

HUNDREDS of angry Tory MPs have complained over the BBC's latest adaptation, this time a new version of Beatrix Potter's classic novel *Peter Rabbit*, for showing on BBC-1 next autumn.

The adapter, Ms Drearie Sludge, yesterday defended her decision to add scenes showing rape and homosexuality to the story, to make it "relevant to the twentieth century audience".

The Buccaneer Stops Here

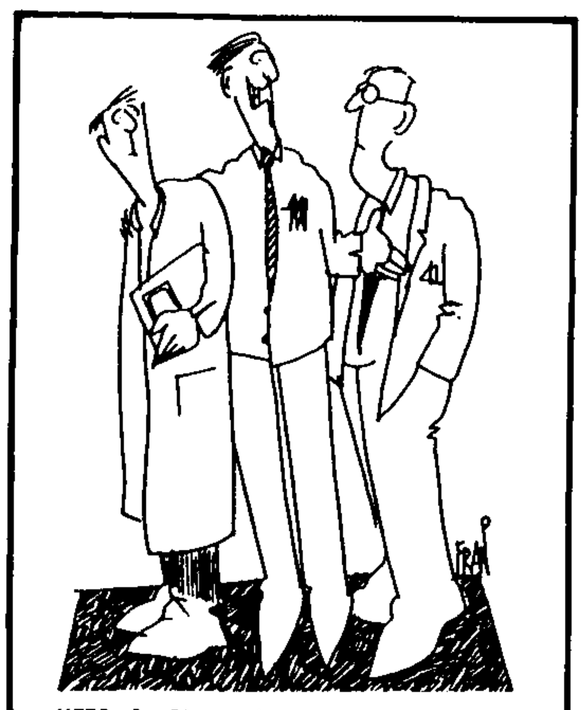
In the new version of the well-loved Potter children's tale, retitled *Reservoir Rabbits*, the hero Peter, accompanied by his gay friend Benjamin, goes into the garden, where the happy-go-lucky pair indulge in an orgy of stealing and group sex, involving various mice, frogs and hedgehogs.

When an interfering grown-up, Mr MacGregor, tries to stop the action, Peter "blows him away" and the two return home to their mother.

Said BBC-1 controller Mr Alan Botney yesterday: "Every age retells the stories in its own language. Shakespeare did it with Plutarch, and so did Dickens.

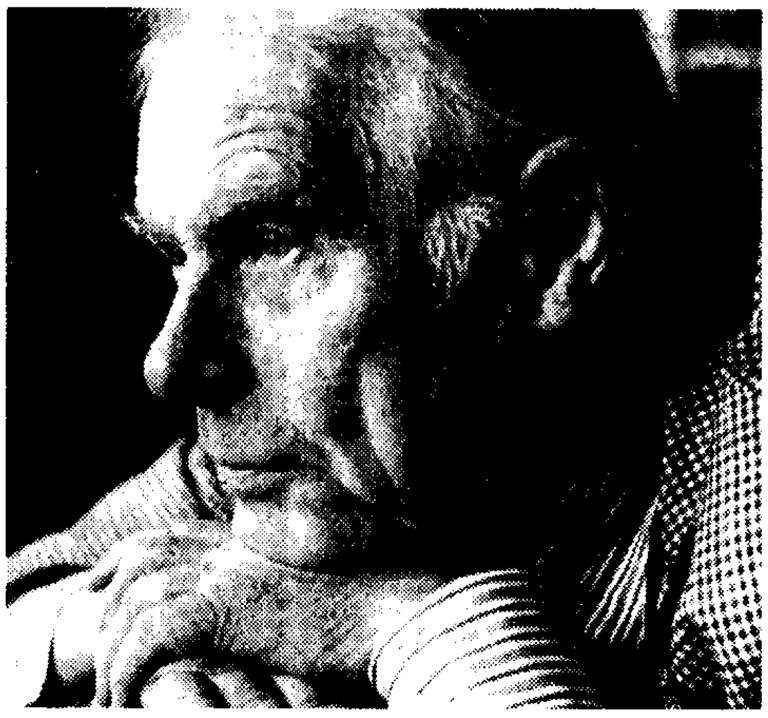
"To suggest that we are just doing this in a desperate bid to get an audience is totally true."

Sir Marmaduke Hussey is 127.



"We believe in treating all our employees as individuals... This is individual no. 1648D"

DIARY



ANTHONY POWELL

20th January 1995: V. and I attended pre-luncheon drinks with the Somersets at Gloucester. Then on to the Gloucesters in Somerset. The Devonshires had brought Kent along. Halfway through luncheon, the butler informed us that Lady Avon was at the door. "Tell her to join us!" said Gloucester, drawing up a chair for her. She sat down and was halfway through her main course (medaillons de veau, pommes Lyonnaises, epinards a la creme — all perfectly eatable), entertaining us with fulsome praise of a new lemon-scented shower gel, whatever that may be, when it emerged that the butler had misheard. She was not the Lady Avon at all, but the Avon Lady. "Surely I might interest you gents in two-in-one apple shampoo and conditioner?" she asked as she was escorted to the door. Quite intolerable. The claret was not unenjoyable.

In the afternoon, re-read complete works of Graham Greene. Pretty thin stuff. Deeply unpleasant fellow, and, one feels, highly conceited: he loathed handing out praise to his contemporaries, retaining all his warmest approval for his own works. Later re-read various fan letters confirming that I am the leading novelist of my generation. Why is it, one wonders, that my fans are so unusually percipient? Or is it the other way round, and do the unusually percipient tend to be my fans? One of life's deeper questions. Must explore further.

21st January 1995: Re-read *Hamlet* by Shakespeare, a competent but unreliable author, though now rather dated and always prone to wordiness. Never to my knowledge managed a novel. *Hamlet* is a not uninteresting play, but the plot is flawed. The Danes are really extremely minor Royalty, even by Scandinavian standards; scarcely worth a lengthy play. Tremendous hoo-ha in final scenes, characteristic of a particular sort of empty kettle Dane. Prince Hamlet wouldn't have lasted long in Pratt's, where Danish Royalty is taken with a fairly hefty pinch of salt. 'Hamlet', a peculiar name — any relation, one wonders, to the Fotherington-Hamlets of Much Hadham? Much to-ing and fro-ing with ghosts, incest, madness and so forth — always the sign of a writer grasping at straws. I would guess that Shakespeare stole many of his more notable lines from the immortal titles in my own *Dance to the Music of Time* sequence. But I should hate to pass judgement.

22nd January 1995: I received a telephone call from a Professor Wildenstein at Princeton University. He wanted to give me a large amount of money. This is the sort of thing the Americans do very well. He said that I was to be awarded some literary prize or other worth 50,000 dollars, and would I do him the honour, etc, of accepting it. Really the most awful bore, but I suppose one must humour these types. Reluctantly, I accept, wondering why he could just have posted it to me, without the need for 'acceptance'. Needless to say, he was delighted. I have noticed in the past that many Americans pronounce 'Dance' with a sharp 'a', rather than a long 'a'. Have others noticed this too, or is it my novelist's ear. I ask him to send the cheque, but, please, no accompanying letter, as these congratulatory missives can prove tedious to plough through.

Re-read the poems of W.B. Yeats. Very Irish.

Noted that the gentleman who played the drums in the celebrated English popular music group 'Slade' is called Don Powell, suggesting he springs from Spanish nobility. May well be related through the Lloyds of Cordoba (one of whom was a Powell of the Radnorshire house of Holder, which is — intriguingly — also the name of the lead singer). Could also be related by marriage to my sister Margaret, author of *Below Stairs* and other successful volumes of memoirs.

23rd January 1995: Attended luncheon at Buckingham Palace. Unexciting guests, mainly philosophers, writers, artists, with a smattering of politicians and showbusiness types. Infinitely dreary. Valiantly trying to inject a little life into the gathering, I raise the interesting question of the knee in literature. "Tolstoy is sparing with his knees, Dickens mentions them only rarely, and Jane Austen not at all," I began. "Can anyone think of any great knee passage in English literature?" This question was met by a fascinated silence, so I enlarged upon the point. "It is an aberration of modern times that so often the 'k' in knee is kept silent. It is a perfect example of contemporary vulgarity that so many younger people — "television newscasters" and so forth — choose to go for the awful pronunciation 'nee', with a soft 'k'. But I am delighted to say that the upper classes continue to pronounce it with its 'k' intact. Incidentally, has anyone read the latest 'Eton College Chronicle'? Any good?"

Alas, they were far too dim-witted to tackle such subtle points. By the time I had completed my speech I found they had decamped to a neighbouring room. The wine was Britvic '95. Chateau new to me, slight whiff of orange about it, not at all bad.

Re-read complete works of Dostoievsky. Heavy going. He completely misses the essential light touch that he might have picked up had be been born in England and sent to, say, Eton. Characters lack *bounce*. But I should hate to pass judgement.

24th January 1995: Re-read the latest *Burke's Peerage*. Very sound on what makes a decent human being, much better in that respect than the *Testaments*, Old and New, which may well be perfectly good when dealing with Middle-Eastern Royalty — particularly acute on King David and family — but otherwise absurdly over-rated, allotting far too much space to Jewish families of little or no significance — shepherds, fishermen, tax-collectors, even carpenters — while ignoring many more distinguished families of the time. These include my illustrious forebears, the Pow-Ells of Gomorrah. Ezekiel Pow-Ell was among the most distinguished manufacturers of crosses in his day; one of his companies may well have fashioned the cross that is pivotal to the whole story, yet he is ruthlessly excluded from the text. In my view, the writers of the Gospels made a mistake in concentrating on the rather thin, disruptive (possibly Leftish? Balliol?) character of the Lord Jesus Christ (the name implies he was the younger son of a Duke, but I find no mention of him in *Burke's*) to the exclusion of those from the better families at the wedding feat at Cana.

Re-read Huckleberry Finn. Very American.

The fiction winners are likely to be Danielle Steel, Terry Pratchett's *Interesting Times* (Gollancz), Danielle Steel's *The Gift* (Bantam Press), Pope John Paul II's *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*

Bookseller

We haven't had a holiday for yonks. I'd quite like to see the Grand Canyon and go down on a donkey.

Lottery winner, Mail on Sunday

"I know that they have to find an identity for themselves — but why does it have to be the one we abandoned sometime in the mid-1970s?"

Literary Review

Money talks

PAPERBACK BESTSELLERS 1994

FORGET the Booker Prize, guys; the corporate publisher's real virility test comes each January with the publication of Alex Hamilton's paperback "fast-seller" list, a run-down on the previous year's top 100 paperbacks in terms of sales (home and export) and product value per title.

For some reason this highly revealing title appears in the *Guardian*, squeezed up against abstruse articles on Kafka; but the trade gets to see it later on in the week when the list is reprinted in *Bookseller*.

The bare statistics are these. The best-selling paperback published in the UK in 1994 was John Grisham's *The Client* (Arrow £5.99) with home sales of 722,159, export figures of 443,541 and a total product value of £6,982,543.

Top publishers in the head-count of listed titles were Transworld and HarperCollins, with 17 each. Here, however, a little interpretation becomes necessary. The Transworld contingent, it turns out, realised a product value of £30,601,650, whereas the HarperCollins team pulled in only £25,739,817. This comparison becomes even more injurious when you tot up, as the *Bookseller* obligingly did, the money out in unearned advances. HarpicCollins, it emerges, has £27 million — that's right, *£27 million!* — out there subsidising some agreeable authorial lifestyles, as opposed to Transworld's paltry £5 million or so.

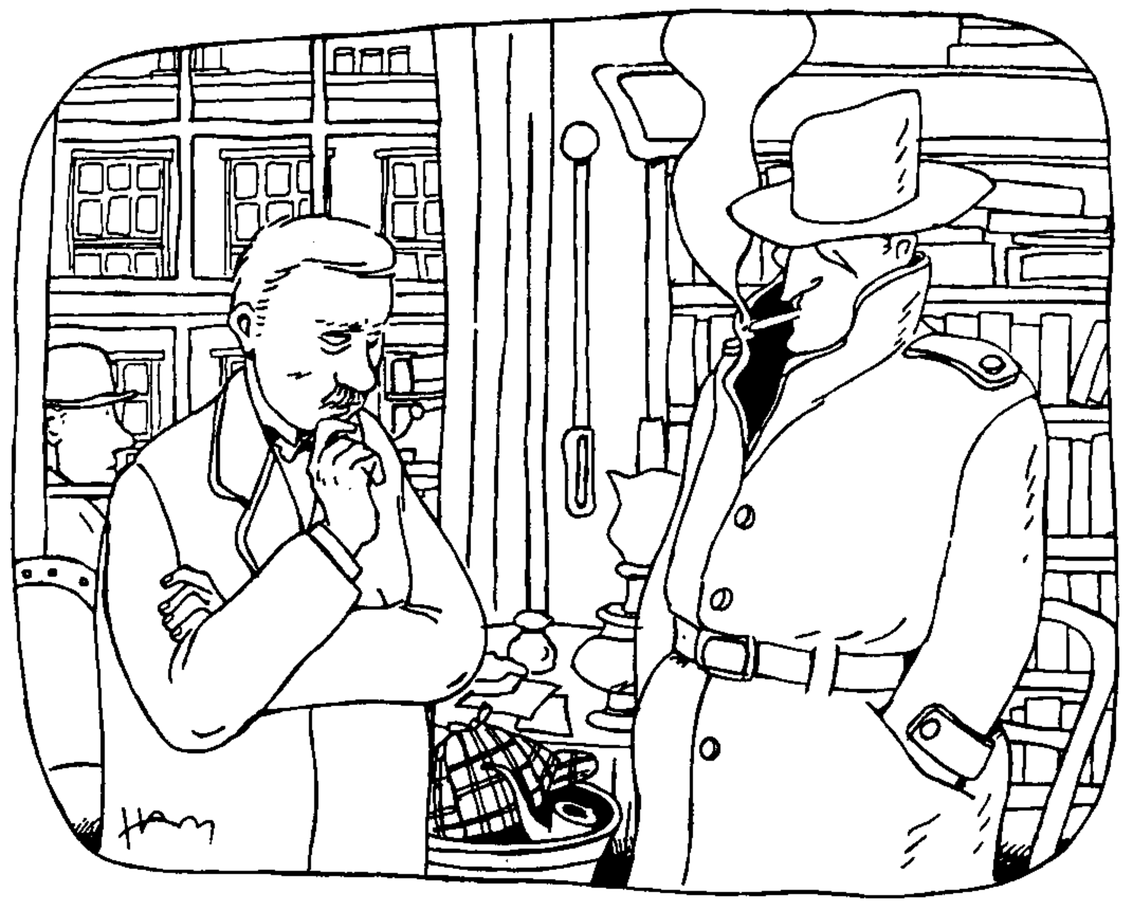
A figure that becomes £27.5 million, of course, with the much-trumpeted arrival of Martin Amis and his darling new novel. If nothing else, the paperback bestseller list puts the acquisition of young Mart into some kind of ghastly perspective. To break even on *The Information* and the accompanying collection of stories Amis had to lob in to jack up the advance, HarperCollins major domo Eddie Bell has to sell 50,000 of each in hardback and 200,000 of each in paperback. It can't — and won't — be done. In fact, you might as well put £200,000 in a suitcase and chuck it in the Thames as lavish it on Mart's alimony payments and his high-grade dental work. Even Vikram Seth, who figures here at Number 21 and is actually — gulp — a *popular* writer only managed 332,000 for the total sales of *A Suitable Boy*, and nearly a third of that was overseas, where, alas, Mart doesn't sell.

The well-known public distaste for what gets reviewed in the serious newspapers is amply reflected here. In among the shelves of thrillers and sagas, cookery books and sword and sorcery rumpuses by messrs Eddings, Williams and Brooks, are six or seven books that a person of taste and discernment might actually want to sit down and read. There is an occasional unlooked-for bright spot — for example, the translation of Peter Hoeg's highbrow detective novel *Miss Smilla's Feeling For Snow* (228,799 total, Number 38) and Sebastian Faulk's *Birdsong* (175,961, Number 47) but even William Boyd, occasionally chided by the books pages for being just a bit too popular, only made it to Number 92 (sales of 110,000) with *The Blue Afternoon*.

What about the rest? As ever book pundits wax knowledgeable about trends — women's fiction is in decline, court-room dramas are in, watch out for renascent sci-fi and so on — but what will really strike the casual observer about the chart is how static the popular taste remains. Apart from Grisham and perhaps Joanna Trollope, the top twenty packed out with the Archers, the Coopers, the Smiths, Cooksons, Francises and Taylor Bradfords, might date from the early '80s, or even earlier. Further down come even older stagers — Jack Higgins, for instance, in there at 27 with *Thunder Point* and even Hammond Innes (*Target Antarctica*, Number 76), the latter a mainstay of the chart for the last half-century.

There are several other points of interest: Wilbur Smith's continual appearances in the top ten (*River God*, Number 7) would look much more impressive if approximately 60 per cent of his 619,752 sales didn't take place overseas; there are *no* celebrity novels, which one or two publishers might take as a hint; and you can still make money out of film tie-ins (Bloomsbury's novelisation of *The Piano, Mrs Doubtfire, Forrest Gump* etc).

Meanwhile, can anyone name a male UK author with no fewer than three books on the list, total sales of a touch under 400,000 and a product value of nearly £2 million? Step forward Mr D.G. Hessayon, author of *The Flowering Shrub Expert, The Greenhouse Expert* and *The Flower Arranging Expert*. If Eddie Bell had any sense he'd be pointing young Mart towards the rhododendrons without further ado.



"I don't think it's quite you, Holmes"

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

☐ THERE was an amusing omission from Godfrey Smith's recent item in the *Sunday Times* about the Royal Society of Literature's forthcoming auction of literary paraphernalia.

The sale of goods — including Dylan Thomas's sweater and John Mortimer's wig — is to raise money to refurbish what is known as Dykes Cottage, the country house left by Russian-born authoress Miss E.M. Almedingen to the RSL and to which indigent authors are being sent.

Sadly Smith did not mention the eminently sensible suggestion of the society's witty secretary Maggie Parham: that the auction's star item should be Martin Amis's original teeth. It is not known if Martin or his dentist declined to cough up and spit out, but the famous teeth will not be auctioned.

■ A TRIUMPH for commonsense — and Bookworm, who campaigned last year against the decision of the health and safety executive (HSE) to have its publications exclusively distributed by Pentos. The decision has been reversed.

As predicted, the HSE found that most people couldn't obtain its publications because most people didn't frequent Dillons or Rymans shops. HSE's publications may again be found in any good bookshop.

☐ *THE Bookseller, which rarely ventures an editorial opinion unless it is to put the boot into Terry Maher, daringly implies in its current issue that the Penguin Group, having made brilliant marketing director Karen Geary redundant, is shortly to close down Hamish Hamilton and have all its hardback books published by Michael Joseph and the characterless Viking.*

This would certainly be in tune with conglomerate philosophy. In fact, the truth is even more banal. Clare Harrington, who does marketing for Viking, will now attempt to embrace Hamish Hamilton as well. The real sufferer is Andrew Franklin, the increasingly eccentric publishing director of Hamish Hamilton, as his loyal authors are bound to be dismayed by the sacking of Geary.

■ NELSON Mandela, who is famed for his tolerant sense of humour, will need every ounce of it when he hears of the latest advertising wheeze from his publisher, Little, Brown and Company.

Over a picture of Nelson's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, the publisher's slogan reads: "Good Things Come in Little, Brown Packages!"

'Bookworm'

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
THESE SUPER-AGENTS ARE MAKING IMPOSSIBLE DEMANDS..
... EXPECTING US TO CALL THEM PATHETIC NICKNAMES!
HELLO IS THAT MR 'THE JACKAL'?..
THEY CALL ME 'THE FISH' - GOD KNOWS WHY
I'M KNOWN AS 'THE TURKEY'
ARCHER DEAL

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY: 1.

THE BOOK: *Dependence Day* by Rob Newman.

THE HYPE: A £90,000 "celeb" advance for a first "novel".

THE SIGHTING: Only a few months after launch, remaindered at Galloway and Porter in Cambridge.

In the City

THE twin-pronged attack on the Guinness One convictions — court of appeal and Strasbourg — raises once more the question of whether the hugely expensive report by the inspectors from the Department of Timidity & Inaction into the Guinness affair will now ever see the light of day.

The inspectors were appointed in late 1986 and it was their discovery of the illegal share support operation and the $25 million handed over to the players which sparked the Scotland Yard investigation. It was also the enforced testimony given by Ernest Saunders, Gerald Ronson, Anthony Parnes and Jack Lyons to the DTI which sealed their fate at the trial — the very point "Alzheimer" Saunders is using with the European court of human rights to overturn his conviction.

The £1 million-plus inspectors' report was largely finished by the time the Guinness Four were convicted in 1990. But at that time publication was delayed pending the three outstanding trials. It was assumed that all that remained was to finalise the verdicts on the leading individuals who featured in the report.

But by early 1992 Guinness Two and Three (merchant bankers Roger Seelig and Lord Spens and stockbroker David Mayhew) had collapsed. There was, however, still Saunders' key American "fixer" Tom Ward. So another one year delay ensued until he was acquitted in early 1993. But now the SFO was facing demands for a judicial review from Parnes (over the undisclosed TWH tribunal finding) and Saunders' Strasbourg campaign. So back on to the shelf went the report once more.

Now it must sit there until the court of appeal and possibly the law lords plus the European court have their say. A delay that could stretch to 1996 — 10 years after the events surrounding the Distillers bid battle which are the subject of the inspectors' report.

But even then there is no guarantee the report will be published. For the embarrassing truth is that it is understood to be highly critical of all those involved in the share support operation. Its criticisms are effectively believed to confirm the convictions of the Guinness Four while heavily criticising those like Seelig, Spens, Mayhew and Ward against whom charges were either dropped or where the jury said "not guilty". It is also said to be somewhat unflattering about some who were never charged, like former S.W. Berisford boss Ephraim Margulies.

Imagine the questions, therefore, if the report is published and everyone who made the share support operation happen has been declared innocent by the courts and demanding millions in compensation!

It seems increasingly likely that the Guinness report may join that into the collapse of John Bloom's Rolls Razor empire in the sixties as being unpublishable. In Bloom's case it was said to be due to the plea bargain done with the washing machine and holiday conman on the steps of the Old Bailey. Publication of the report would have shown that to have been far too generous. Publication of the Guinness report might also come to be similarly classed as not in anybody's interest — other than the truth.

THE generosity of that pillar of probity Mohamed Fayed towards government minister Neil Hamilton, plus the many MPs and journalists who have enjoyed free the pleasures of the phoney pharaoh's Ritz hotel in Paris, has done nothing to improve the hotel's chronic financial position.

For the year to December 1993 the hotel lost £6.75 million on a turnover of £29 million. After servicing the substantial borrowings — almost £29 million — the loss grew to £10 million. But then losses are nothing new for the prestigious hotel which is wheeled out as evidence of Fayed's supposed fabulous wealth. Total losses have now reached £142 million following years of red entries.

All of which might have encouraged the normal businessman to cut out freebies for freeloaders. But then Mohamed Fayed is far from a normal businessman and "comping" ministers, MPs and journalists — either at the Ritz or the Harrods food hall — is the only way he can win friends and influence anyone. Especially for a man who complains about corruption in public life.

As the tape of the meeting with *Sunday Express* editor Brian Hitchen (that resulted in the approach to John Major) reveals in all its expletives undeleted glory, Fayed is hardly blessed with the charm or morality of the whited sepulchre painted by the *Guardian*.

And as to his patriotic claims to be "100 percent British" and to have paid "large amounts of tax", it is worth noting that the Ritz, like Harrods, is owned offshore — via companies in such "British" outposts as Jersey, Holland and Liechtenstein.

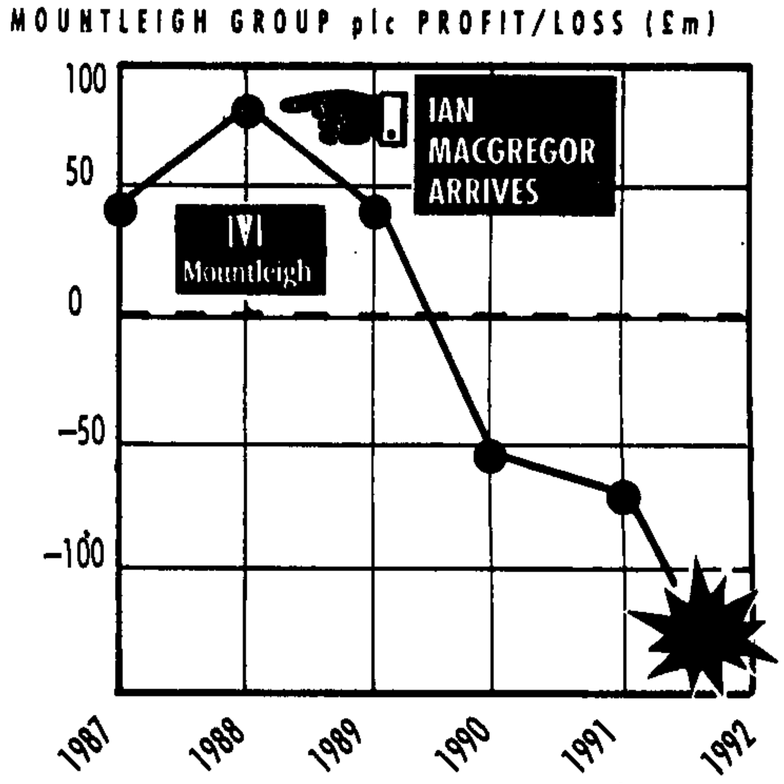
IT SEEMS ADT chairman Michael Ashcroft is embarking on an unlikely "charm" offensive, seeking to change his unflattering City image.

His unlikely ally in this surely doomed venture is none other than David "Dirty Tricks" Burnside, late of British Airways. This charmless pair have been inviting select senior financial hacks to discreet dinners. So far, however, the campaign has yet to show any meaningful dividend. What a surprise...

IT WOULD be unfair to suggest that the timing of the fragrant Mary Archer's proposed resignation from Anglia TV — after the February board meeting — may be to ensure there is no possibility of any further allegations of price sensitive leaks.

After all, imagine the embarrassment if shares in MAI moved up or down after another Anglia board meeting involving share deals by Lord Archer or friends as happened last year ahead of the MAI bid for Anglia! This way, whatever happens it cannot be the fault of Lady Archer — just like last time.

British Management Part 10.
SIR IAN MACGREGOR, former Chief Executive of National Coal Board and Chairman of British Steel. Appointed Deputy Chairman Mountleigh plc in 1988.



ANGRY creditors of the Athena shops chain which plunged into liquidation on 27 December harbour justified suspicions about the timing of the decision by its parent company Pentos to cease supporting its subsidiary.

Goods were delivered for Christmas on the basis of payment in January. Pentos therefore received the gain from pre-Christmas sales leaving Athena suppliers to feel the pain. Creditors will be keen to find out at what stage Pentos took the decision that was effected only two days after Christmas.

There are also rumours — no doubt unfounded — that in the final days money from Athena stores was not paid into Athena bank accounts but into other Pentos accounts.

BAT is said to be facing some probing internal questions as a consequence of the arrest of a Chinese businessman in Hong Kong in connection with an alleged Triad-linked cigarette smuggling operation. The businessman is connected to reputedly one of BAT's biggest customers.

He faces charges involving the payment of bribes to customs officials and senior officers of BAT's Hong Kong subsidiary since 1986. The scandal is already said to have had repercussions for BAT in Switzerland and may also have links to its US operations.

AN OLD friend almost back on the scene is Tom Wilmot of Harvard Securities "bucket shop" ill-fame. Following in father's footsteps, son Christopher has popped up at Irish & European Securities in Dublin which trades in a number of local and Canadian "hot" stocks.

Harvard closed down six years ago when it was unwanted by any UK market regulator following a series of promotions which left investors either singed, burned or incinerated. However, Irish & European customers can rest easy. Officially Tom Wilmot is only "keeping an eye on the company" and "giving some advice". However, more recently the *Sunday Telegraph* reported that Wilmot "runs a Dublin securities firm". Nuff said!

'Slicker'

FOOTNOTES, SEE OVER...

footnotes

SHOCK HORROR

FEW viewers of Channel Four's *Despatches* programme on electric shock torture batons could resist the infectious enthusiasm of Glasgow entrepreneur Frank Stott.

Stott could hardly wait to show off his electronic batons and shields to the Channel Four men who disguised themselves as businessmen. He brought some favourite specimens down to a suite at the Hilton and paraded them proudly before the hidden telly cameras. Stott made it clear he could supply any amount of his exciting "kit", which is surprising since the Scottish office emphatically insists he is not licensed to make or sell anything of the kind.

As a result of the programme, Mr Stott is being investigated by the Strathclyde police. This may be embarrassing; for Mr Stott recently delivered a scintillating lecture to a conference of the prestigious Association of Police and Public Security Suppliers (APPSS) at the Moat House hotel in Stratford-on-Avon.

Stott sits on the board of the APPSS, whose chairman is Sir Kenneth Newman, former Metropolitan commissioner. He could not make the Stott lecture, but it was attended by half the chief constables in Britain. For some reason they all failed to arrest or even interrogate Mr Stott.

FOUL AND FOWLER: Paul Judge and friend

Another disclosure on the *Despatches* programme — that the Birmingham company Hiatt is putting longer chains on handcuffs to avoid the government ban on leg-irons — caused some dismay in high places. Hiatt was exposed by the *Daily Mirror* in 1983 for selling leg-irons to dictators. Business slumped and for a grim few months Hiatt teetered on the edge of bankruptcy. It was saved in the nick of time by Central Industry Limited, half of which was owned by Grosvenor Development Capital. The Grosvenor board was later joined by a very important businessman indeed — Mr Paul Judge. Mr Judge has moved on: he is now director-general of the Conservative party.

Put out more flagships

■ NO EXPENSE is spared by the lord chancellor's office to prove his point that legal aid bills could be cut if solicitors managed their firms more efficiently and ruthlessly. But the results are not always convincing.

For most of the 1990s the legal aid board, a quango close to the lord chancellor, Lord Mackay, carried out an expensive survey into solicitors' firms specially "franchised" by the government to do legal aid work.

Research concentrated on two big firms, which became known as "Mackay's flagships" the first, described as "firm A", was Deacon Goldrein Green of Liverpool. The board's final report, published last July, concluded: "There are impressive indications as to certain aspects of the firm's operations which may encourage an efficient and effective use of resources... The model outlined may serve to provide a competent level of services in an efficient manner."

Whoops! Four months after the report, Deacon Goldrein Green collapsed... because it couldn't pay the banks the money it had borrowed to finance legal aid work. Now it is bankrupt.

Obviously the legal aid board was not going to rely on the experience of just one firm. It chose another, "firm B", the huge Sussex and Kent practice of Durnford Ford. Once again, a detailed investigation ended in ecstatic conclusions: "Firm B have adopted an impressive system for the management of a large volume of matrimonial work... the systems outlined provide a number of impressive quality guarantees, seeming to allow work to be handled quickly and efficiently by formalising and making explicit an approach which may guarantee quality work and minimise the costs of quality control."

Whoops! Even before the report was published, Durnford Ford had gone bust with debts of £7 million. After innumerable complaints from clients the senior partner, Graham Durnford Ford, had been struck off as "a disgrace to the profession".

The Truth? Fat Chancellor

■ **"SCOTT wants more answers," proclaimed Paul Eastham, political correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, on 5 January.**

The piece "disclosed" that Sir Richard Scott had told John Major that he had "still not yet got to the bottom of who was responsible" (*Daily Mail* grammar) for the "apparent flouting of rules" on the export of arms to Iraq; and had further delayed his report until October.

This was fiction of a high order even for the *Daily Mail*. The Scott inquiry replied at once denying the whole story, and repeating that the Scott report will be published as expected "around Easter". So why was such a crass error printed?

One clue may be that Eastham's article names only two ministers "whose conduct is expected to be heavily criticised in the Scott report" — William Waldegrave, now the agriculture minister, and Sir Nicholas Lyell, the attorney-general. The same two were picked out in an article in the *Financial Times* by Jimmy Burns (who boasts of social connections with Scott), and Lyell and Waldegrave are indeed at risk. But so is Kenneth Clarke QC, the chancellor, who was not mentioned in the list of likely casualties in the *Mail* or the *FT*.

From 1991 when he was charged will illegal arms exports to Iraq, Paul Henderson, managing director of the Iraqi-owned Matrix Churchill firm in Coventry, wanted to defend himself by revealing that he was working with and for the security services who knew all about the illegal exports to Iraq. He demanded from the home office the documentary proof that he was working for MI6.

Kenneth Clarke, then the home secretary, signed a "public interest immunity certificate" (gagging order) refusing Henderson the necessary documents. At the Scott inquiry Clarke insisted absurdly that Henderson had not been "remotely prejudiced" by the suppression of this vital evidence. Clarke explained portentously he had "to protect the security service and the people who helped it". He went on: "I was in no doubt that I had a duty and not a discretion to sign the certificates."

Whoops! A few minutes later Clarke admitted that he had released two statements from intelligence officers. Asked by Presiley Baxendale and Sir Richard Scott if this proved that he was using his discretion rather than his duty, he grudgingly conceded the point.

Scott then asked Clarke why he had refused to disclose the secret documents even though entire pages had been blanked out by MI6. Clarke replied that the headings "Content, Date and Time" still appeared on the erased pages, and their place and position might be of assistance to an enemy. "If you have the words `content, date and time' fixed on your page," he drooled, "you are beginning to get going in deciphering whatever code it is in. The security service do not wish everybody to know where those words appear on the page. Thanks to this trial they now do."

For some reason the entire inquiry and its audience greeted this outburst with prolonged laughter.

FACT TO REMEMBER: On *Question Time* last year Mr Clarke promised to resign if he was criticised by Sir Richard Scott.

THE THINGS HE SAID

DAVID FROST: Do you have your own view on Clause Four, I mean would you oppose it being dropped?

TONY BLAIR: Well, I don't think that anyone actually wants that to be the priority of the Labour party at the moment. I mean, I understand why people have raised this...

FROST: Jack Straw, Neil Kinnock...

BLAIR: Absolutely right. But I don't think anyone is saying now, looking ahead to the next two years in the run-up to an election, that this is the sort of thing we should focus on. And I think for the vast majority of the British people, I don't think they sit out there and debate the intricacies of the Labour party constitution.

Breakfast With Frost, BBC 1, 12 June 1994.

Hey, Ricks!

IS IT disastrous for a British businessman to have been involved in the sale of defence equipment to Saddam Hussein's Iraq? Not if he's in business with the head of the government's spy centre, GCHQ.

Proof is the remarkable case of Roy Ricks, who in 1987 teamed up with an Iraqi businessman called Anees Wadi in a company called Meed International.

In May 1991 Ricks told the Commons select committee on the supergun that none of his companies was "involved in defence-related exports". This was strictly true, though in the late 1980s Meed International acted as agents in conection with contracts for machine tools made in Britain and sold to make munitions in Iraq.

Paul Henderson, then managing director of the Midlands machine tools firm Matrix Churchill, wrote: "Wadi and Ricks wanted 10 per cent of the price on any sales they arranged for western manufacturers. Commissions are normal in business but Wadi's cut bordered on extortion." So Meed had to settle for less.

Henderson also discloses a £19 million contract for the sale to Iraq of artillery shells and rocket tubes from which Ricks's and Wadi's company pocketed £600,000. "Wadi insisted on celebrating with a long lunch at an expensive Chinese restaurant," wrote Henderson, adding ruefully: "I paid the bill." (*The Unlikely Spy*, Bloomsbury, page 81.)

Ricks and Wadi worked hard to bring about the sale of Matrix Churchill to the Iraqi government in 1987. A company in which they were directors, Admincheck, came out of the sale with 2.5 per cent of the shares, valued at £100,000. In October 1987, Ricks and Wadi set up another company, TEG, which helped the Iraqi government build up its military arsenal by careful buying in Europe.

It is hard to think of anyone in Britain who was closer to the sale of British defence equipment to Iraq than Mr Ricks. Equally, it is hard to think of anyone in the business who has been less exposed to public investigation. Ricks wrote one letter to the select committee on supergun, and did not appear at any of the public hearings of the Scott inquiry.

Why? Half an answer comes from Paul Henderson: "I always suspected Ricks had something to do with British intelligence, but I never knew it for a fact" (page 80).

Another answer could be that Mr Ricks has an influential colleague in Sir Brian Tovey, who was director of GCHQ from 1978 until 1983.

Mr Ricks and Sir Brian are now managing director and chairman of

LIKELY SPY: Roy Ricks

IES Group plc, which specialises in electronic security equipment. The company has been strikingly successful. In December 1993 it was worth just over a million pounds. Now it's worth £9.5 million. The value of Ricks's stake is up from £300,000 to more than £3 million.

FACT TO REMEMBER: One of IES's customers is the foreign office, which runs GCHQ.

TURNER ROUND

■ RETIRED teacher Peter Turner was an early candidate for a seat on one of the richest quangos, the Funding Agency for Schools.

From magnificent offices in York, the quango splashes out taxpayers' money for schools which opt out of local authority control. Naturally, therefore, agency members like Mr Turner are all strong supporters of opting out. They are paid £155 per working day, and the more the schools opt out, the more days they have to work.

Peter Turner is chairman of the governors of the Edmund de Moundeford School in Norfolk, which decided recently to call for a vote on opting out. He was not fantastically happy with the result: 27 parents voted for opting out, while 202 (88 per cent) voted against.

Meanwhile over at the Grant Maintained Schools Centre, which with huge subsidies from the taxpayer, tries to persuade parents to opt out, there was a job going for one of the boys. Teenager Alex Balchin was lucky enough to be taken on for work (paid by the taxpayer) during four and a half months of his holiday last summer. He was hired over the kitchen table one morning by his father, Sir Robert Balchin, the former boss of south east Tories who is chairman of the Centre and also sits, for good measure, on the Funding Agency for Schools.

The *Eye* asked the centre director Adrian Pritchard: "Don't you think this sort of thing leaves you open to the charge of the most blatant patronage and sleaze?"

Here is the reply: "Sir Robert's son was taken on for a limited period to assist with mailing and filing at a time of the most intense activity."

Mr Norris changes names

■ AN EYE reader in Salisbury, Wiltshire, sends in an absorbing picture of the town's accredited Volkswagen and Audi car dealer.

Not so long ago, he tells us, the business name "Anthony Ince" replaced the rather more exciting "Steve Norris" — the latter sounding uncannily like that of the junior transport minister and philanderer of the same name.

But *surely* a minister of transport who has to spend so much time balancing the merits of road and rail, cannot possibly have a stake in a car dealers? Oh yes he can.

Steve Norris (Western) Ltd, whose turnover in 1991 was more than £6 million, changed to Anthony Ince Ltd in that year just as Mr Norris was grooming himself for ministerial office.

Mr Ince bought a lot of shares, but Mr Norris, in spite of his ministerial office, held on to 12,650 of them and still has them.

FOR SCOTLAND AND ST GEORGE(S).

■ HAS anyone noticed the surprising coincidences in the following facts? Can they by any chance be related?

1) George Matthewson was chief executive of the Scottish Development Agency when the agency, with government support, decided to splash out millions of pounds of taxpayers' money on a luxury private hospital in one of the poorest areas of Scotland for the exclusive use of mega-rich foreigners. The hospital opened last year and almost immediately went into receivership.

CHIEF CHIEF: George Mathewson

2) George Younger was the secretary of state for Scotland, who inspired and approved that decision.

3) George Matthewson is now chief executive of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

4) George Younger is chairman of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

5) One of the Royal Bank of Scotland's most prestigious clients is the Conservative party... which is allowed an overdraft of at least £15 million.

P.S. A consortium led by an Abu Dhabi investment company looks set to buy the insolvent hospital for just £60million (original cost £180 million). Tory Scottish Secretary Ian Lang is generously contributing £4.4 million of the public's money.

Jail bait for rugger buggers

■ REVELATIONS in last *Eye* about the shocking state of Britain's three privatised prisons galvanised the director-general of prisons and Granada-reject Derek Lewis into action — to build another one.

Spies told him that the fans of Swinton rugby league football club in Greater Manchester are cross about losing their stadium (it was flogged off for a property development), and that they now have to trek out to Bury association football ground to watch their team.

So Mr Lewis offered Salford council a whole new stadium — paid for by the taxpayer — if the council would flog him the land now occupied by the (closed) Agecroft power station for a new private prison.

The answer has surprised him: no.

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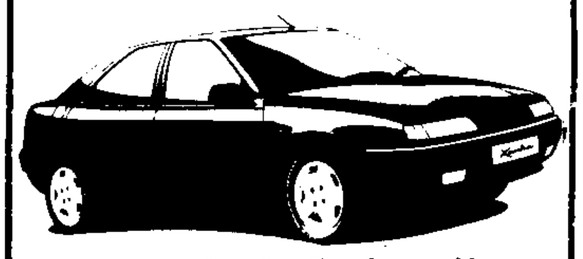

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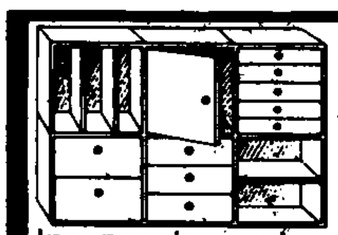

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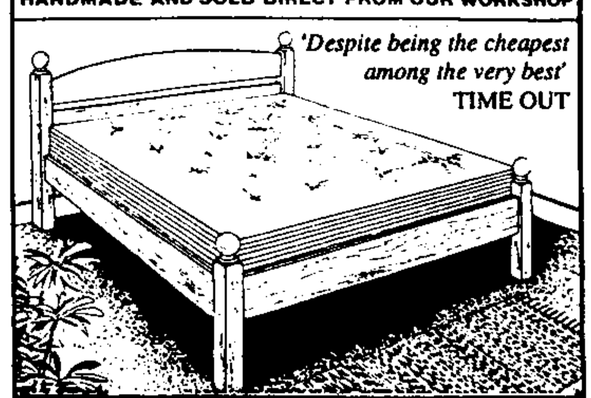

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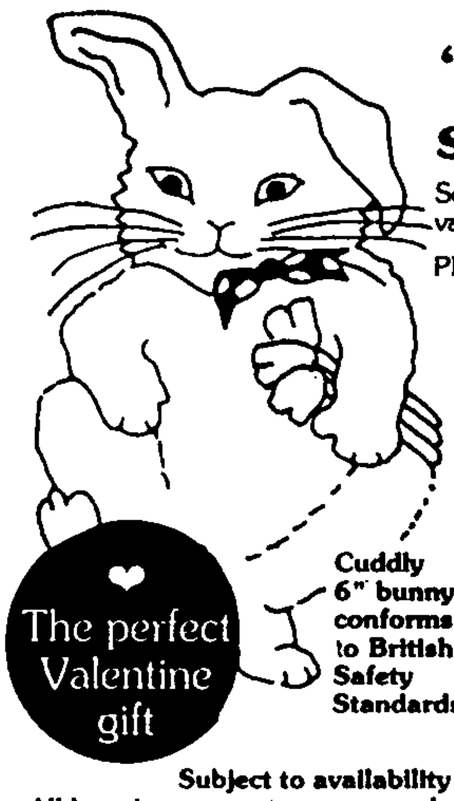

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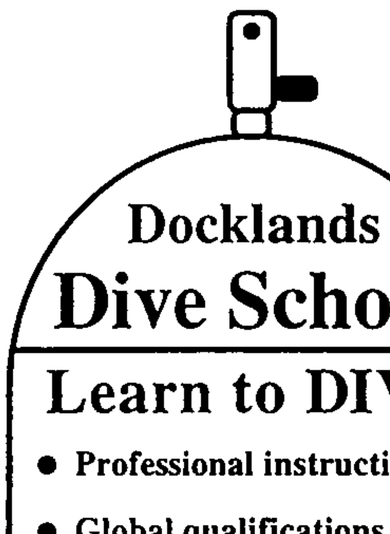

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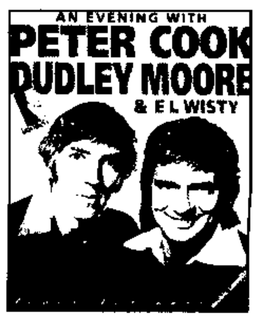

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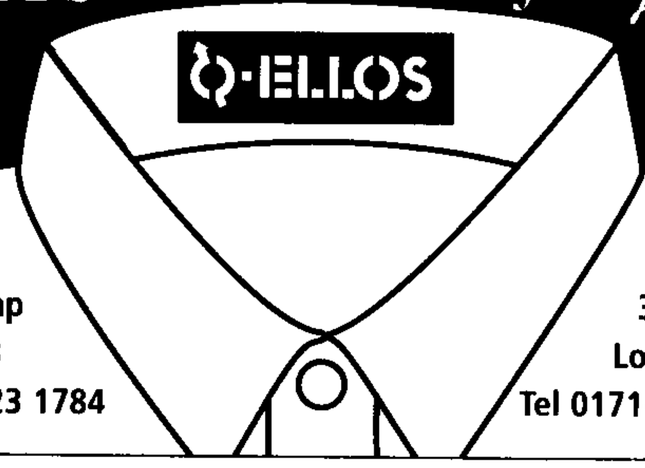

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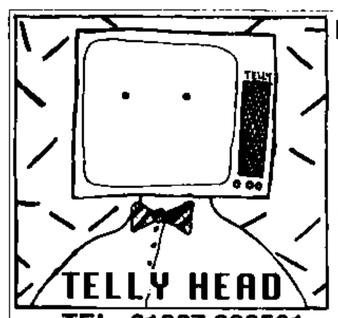

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THE OBSERVER

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SPEECH WRITING by Mitch Murray. See Page 30.

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THE GREAT FAMINE — Established Theatre Company seeks donors/sponsors for new play commemorating 150th anniversary of the Irish Potato Famine. Box No.0764.

DISTRESSED DAMSEL grateful for any financial help to make getaway. Box No. 0864.

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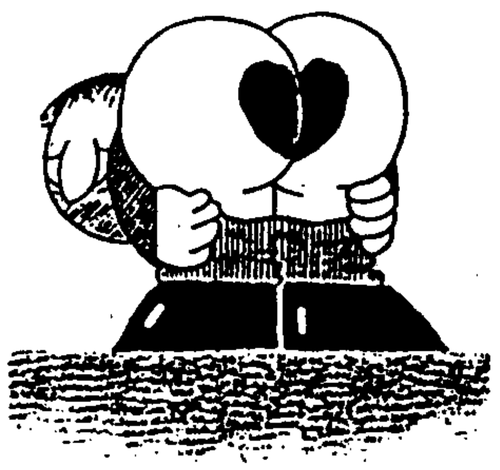

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CYNICAL? ME TOO! Persuade me I'm wrong. Ludicrous man (27) seeks spectacular woman for fun, travel, culture, romance. Photo appreciated. Box 1164.

ENJOY GOOD FOOD, good wine, good company — where's the good company? Are you HK-based, 30-45, single, looking for bubbly dynamic female company? Look no further! Box 1264.

SCORPIO MALE, sixty-three, mainline sexually but missing sideline merriment, seeks madam similarly motivated. For initial fun. Box 1364.

MALE 33, tall, fit. Wicked SOH. Adventurous mind and tongue. Seeks tall lively female for fun and travels. South England. Box 1464.

PROFESSIONAL WORKAHOLIC, 45, 6'1", (apparently) handsome, healthy, seeks special lady 21-35 to share good food, good music, good times and to pamper shamelessly. Photo and lots of details, please. Midlands/anywhere. Box 1564.

ISLE OF MAN BASED retired executive, married and bored, needs mature Manx lady to bring some excitement into life. Box 1664.

MAVERICK MALE 29, quiet but confident professional, seeks wholesome, feminine, tender girl who likes sky, mud, real fires and blues music. Non-smoker. London/South. Box 1964.

ROMANTIC WOMAN 26, with GSOH and sensuality, WLTM MD with warm bedside manner and big stethoscope. Box 2064.

PETITE AND CUDDLY dragon, rare Indian species, seeks knight in armour (slightly tarnished considered) Box 2164.

FUN-LOVING PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, 31, divorced smoker into music and cinema seeks tall professional man, 25-40, to share uncomplicated relationship with. London/Kent. Box 2264.

NICE LOOKING, intelligent, witty, solvent, 5'11", fit, considerate male, 38, seeks attractive female, probably more broody than career crazed, sincere but fun, 30-40, for love, marriage and kids — yeah, honestly! Photo please. Box 2364.

ROMANTIC MAN 44 open, sensuous but shyish. Likes music, film, eating/drinking in/out, sex, country, travel. Wants slim, sexy woman who knows herself to explore life and love, mind and body. London/South. Box 2464.

NORTH LONDON MAN 44, fit, 6ft non-smoker, divorced, seeks similar lady 38-50 for meals out, cinema, friendship. Box 2564.

GENTLEMAN IN LEEDS, 33, wants lady of good mind and spirit who likes travelling to Leeds or me travelling to you. Box 0959.

ARE YOU AN "otherwise happily", safely married lady under 42 who would enjoy a "sometimes man" for daytime sessions of ecstasy and passion? Millionaire businessman, 42, tall, dark and "nearly, but not quite" handsome, educated, intelligent, reliable, discreet, safely but "otherwise happily" married will love to hear from you. Photo if possible, please. Daytime telephone number essential for discreet initial conversation. Absolute discretion assured and expected. Is anybody out there? Box 1263.

HANDSOME, INTELLIGENT black male, 6'5", 29, athletic build, requires sophisticated, exciting, slim female. Photograph appreciated. Box 2163.

LOOSELY ATTACHED tall optimist (48) seeks aware n/s lady for mutual appreciation (London) Box 1064.

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MALE 37, loves cuddles, seeks female, 25-35, with similar interests. Box 1764.

ATTRACTIVE BRISTOL professional female 47 seeks witty, urbane businessman or professional, similar age, for date etc. Box 2664.

MALE 51, seeks attractive lady friend/lover 30-50 London/SE Box 2764.

PIANIST (30), pretty, petite, curvaceous, seeks single, funny, considerate n/s music lover to accompany through life. Hampshire. Photo please. Box 2864.

KIND, SINGLE, BRIGHT MAN with drive sought by happy, outdoor-loving, early 30s blue eyed graduate lady. Photo appreciated. Box 2964.

WHICH CONFIDENT ambitious professional 30s single man can catch this lovely strong blonde professional London lady? Photo please. Box 3064.

TALL, PROFESSIONAL, open black guy 26 seeks fun, intelligent gal to look beyond the stars with. London/Southeast. Box 3164.

SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN, tall, slim, 44, in failing marriage looking for very attractive, intelligent, discreet lady to love, cherish, spoil and one day make a new life. You must have GSOH, patience, understanding and believe that life has more to offer. Make 1995 a new beginning. Photo essential. Box 3264.

VERY ATTRACTIVE solvent, virile, humorous, intelligent man, 45, with excellent physique, mediterranian origin, Central London flat, seeks attractive, intelligent, sexy woman 20-50, attached or unattached, for a lovely discreet or indiscreet affair. Photo please. Box 3364.

BUBBLY, WARM, sensuous female graduate (53) interested in the arts, pubs and good conversation, seeks unattached professional male for a cultivated and fun relationship. Box 1864.

WANTED a mature, passionate, honest man who can hold me when I call, without holding back — who can dream and fight the world for me, who is not afraid to love. If you exist then write with photo. No pretenders please. Box 3564.

MALE BARRISTER, 36, 6', non-pompous, amusing, kind (and modest - this ad is inserted by a friend), seeks very attractive intelligent girlfriend. Box 3664.

TERRIFICALLY CUTE, curvy girl (24); unbelievably passionate, intelligent, creative, sweet, sunny smile; wants to meet a man she can lose herself in. Box 3764.

LARGE MUSCULAR MAN seeks small randy girl for short-term friendship (18-40). Box 3864.

JOURNALIST young 40, slim, blonde, eclectic, knows she needs bright, artistic, creature-loving man, 30s-40s, with huge farmhouse, big ideas and rumblings for a family — or life-enhancing campaign. Dark, educated, free-thinker? Box 3964.

SINGLE ATTRACTIVE MALE 26 seeks sexy woman 20-35 for uncomplicated affair. Photo please. London. Box 4064.

BUSINESSMAN 40, Oxfordshire-based, married, looking for someone to bring romance and passion back into his life. Discretion assured. Box 4164.

SCORPIO MAN. Passionate, bright, humane, tall, dark, fit, divorced, 45. Seeks under 40, loving, artistic, sensual, practical, brave, easy-going, GSOH, fit, adventuress to share his life and passions as aid worker and writer on edge of central Asian war zone. Your story and photos to Box 4264.

INTELLIGENT MALE, 45, tall, attractive and affectionate, seeks romance with a warm sensual lady. Must have nice lips and be a good kisser. North London. Box 4364.

MATURE MAN/ golden oldie wanted, ideally Oxford-based opera-loving optimist, but any warm wizard chap considered by attractive, intelligent, cuddly charmer (50s) for friendship, fund, spell-binding times. Box 4464.

BUXOM JOURNO seeks whole-wit for pizza without angst. Box 4564.

NORFOLK BACHELOR, 34, shy, slim, educated seeks sensitive plump/large lady, any age, for romantic enrichment. Anywhere. Box 4664.

FIN DE SIECLE ROMANCE sought by blonde bluestocking, 30, wise, witty and wonderful; craving meeting of true minds with gentleman, 30-40. Interests: antiques, literature, hilarity and decandence! Oxon. Box 4764.

ATTRACTIVE LADY 27, tall, slim, intelligent, needs caring sensitive man for fun and pampering. London. Box 4864.

SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL, male, 29, seeks bright, exotic, fun female for unashamed fun and excitement. Box 4964.

CHARMING, HANDSOME Englishman, 38, seeks exotic younger woman. Box 5064.

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HANDSOME, SUCCESSFUL, magazine editor, seeks cultured, stylish and highly intelligent young woman, for beautiful relationship. Ring 0660 204350

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TALL, ATTRACTIVE ENGLISHMAN, 28, who dares to advertise. Requires permanent, caring, quality relationship, with slimmish, intelligent female, 18-30, any colour (who dares to reply). Ring 0660 204447

CARING, TALL, initially shy, but cuddly white female, 39, seeks tall male, 35+, to share the better things in life. Ring 0660 207819

ADVENTUROUS, SPIRITED, self confident, successful, tall, slim, attractive, design-minded, sensitive, witty and slightly mad expat male seeks complimentary female soulmate, 20-30, to share? Ring 0660 204453

TALL, DARK BEAUTIFUL (inner and outer) heart oriented lady, 35 plus, with wonderful sense of rhythm and humour, seeks similiar man to dance with through all aspects of relationship. Ring 0660 204225

VERY ATTRACTIVE BLONDE woman, 30, intelligent, upmarket, seeks genuine, wealthy business/family type gentleman, for friendship, lifelong togetherness, marriage & children, single fathers welcome. Ring 0660 208971

HANDSOME MALE, 36, British/European, medium build, seeks attractive, sensuous, single white female, 27/40, no ties, similar background, for fun, friendship and relationship. Ring 0660 204332

WARM, LOVING, ATTRACTIVE, intelligent, professional, Asian female, seeks sensitive, romantic, yet realistic, confident man to enjoy/share what life has on offer. Ring 0660 204099

SVELTE, PHLEGMATIC, GLEEFUL, confident, discerning woman, mid 40s, seeks poodle-faker, boulevardier, lounge lizard for soirees and fireside chats. Ring 0660 204077

DOCTOR, 35, wishes to meet unmarried, uncomplicated, professional, sincere and loving lady, under 32, for romantic walks, dinners and travel. Cambridge or London area. Ring 0660 204070

PETITE LADY, early 40s, caring, affectionate nature, seeks warm, arts oriented creative man, 30-45, for music, concerts, theatre and social events. Ring 0660 209334

LOOKING FOR A MAN? then why not try our new Library Line service. To listen to a selection of past, present and even future male Opening Lines advertisers, just dial this number. Ring 0660 204222

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FUN ON THE SOUTH COAST, professional businessman, 6ft, divorced. Seeks attractive, chatty girlfriend, 30s, for long term relationship. Ring 0660 205976

PEDALING PROUSTIAN, who loves literature, music, and cycling, seeks bright, dark haired lady, 25-35, for a beautiful relationship. Ring 0660 204439

WILD UNTAMED BLONDE, seeks tall, good looking, intelligent blonde devil, 32-42, who can laugh, care, dream, and love and sweep me off my feet. Ring 0660 204144

JOHN MARTIN, Dali, music, guitars, nature, writing, jazz. Piscean, 37, romantic, wacky, seeks Virgo female, 28-35, with above interests. Pubbers and clubbers need not apply. Ring 0660 204423

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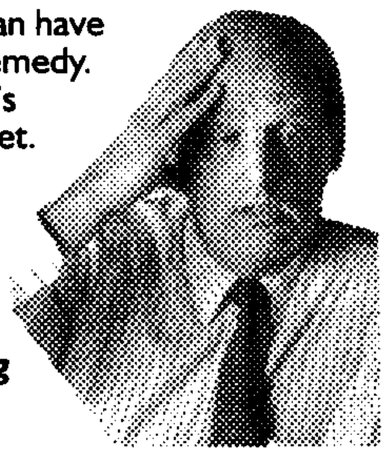

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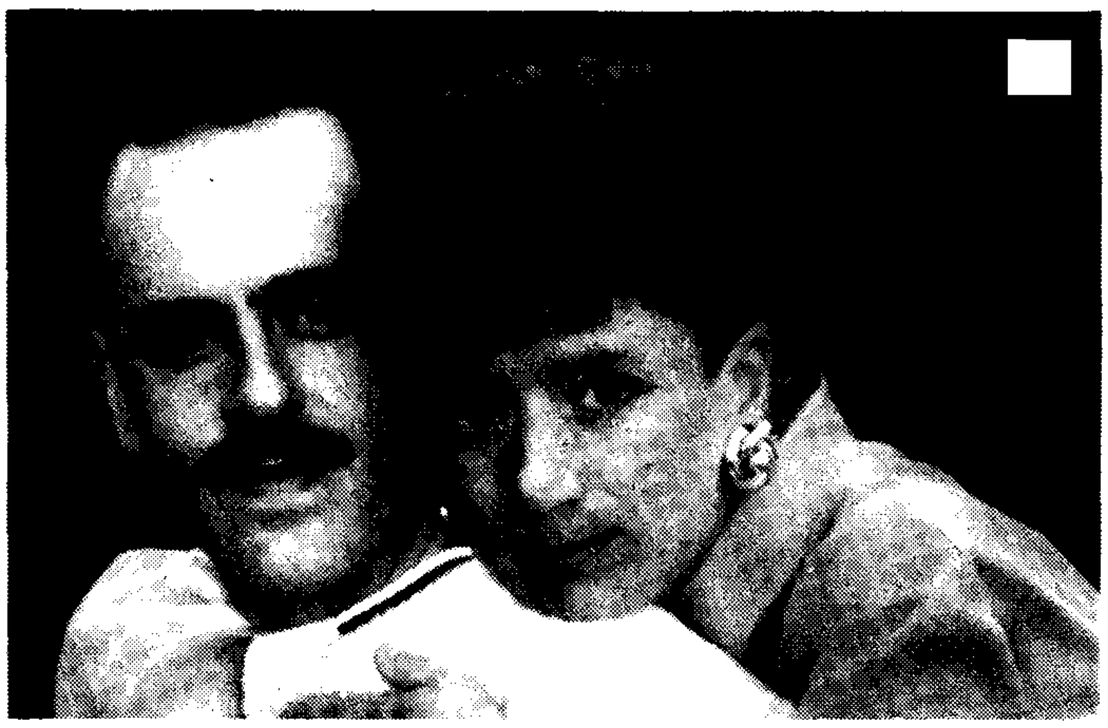

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Please complete in block capitals

1. Mr ❒ Mrs ❒ Ms ❒

Surname:_____

First Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

_____ Post Code:_____

Tel No._____

I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒

Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Religion:_____

Age:_____

Place of Birth:_____

Do you have children of your own?

Yes ❒ No ❒

If yes, how many live with you?_____

3. Your personal details

Height:_____

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Hair colour:_____

Dress/Looks: casual ❒ fashionable ❒ elegant ❒ sporty ❒

4. Your work

Present job:_____

Self-employed ❒ employed ❒

civil servant ❒ manual worker ❒

part-time ❒ not working ❒

unemployed ❒ in-training ❒

Schooling

O levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒

Further Education ❒ Polytechnic ❒

University ❒ Business School ❒

Other:_____

5. Your Personality

❒ Warmhearted ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

6. How would people who know you best describe you?

❒ always ready for a joke
❒ somewhat dreamy
❒ never has problems
❒ takes life a bit too seriously
❒ not easily upset
❒ always active
❒ chatty

7. Your interests

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Politics/History ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Drinking
❒ Science/Tech ❒ Children
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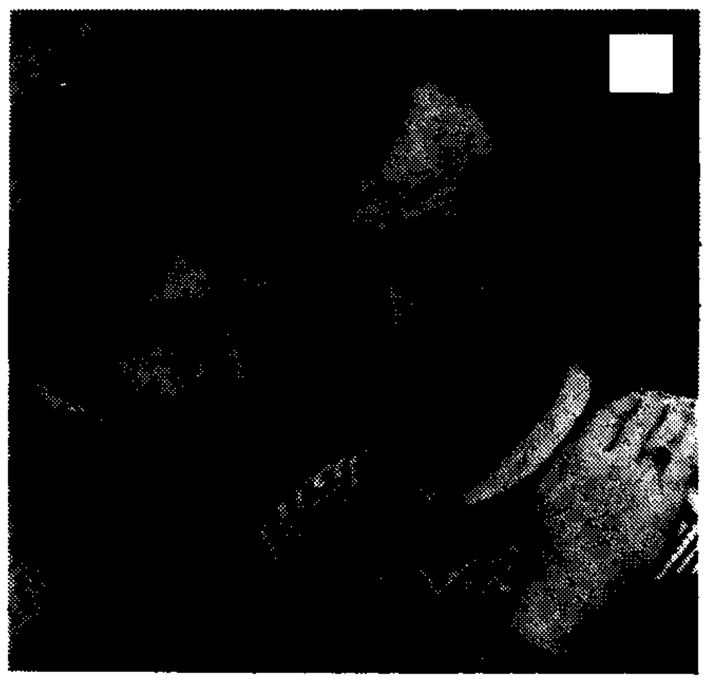
❒ Pop music ❒ Countryside



8. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:___ Maximum age:_____

Height: min._____ max.____ Don't mind ❒

Children?

Yes, at home ❒ Yes, living elsewhere ❒

None ❒

Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒

Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Don't mind ❒

9. Which of the three pictures do you prefer? (tick the box)

Dept. PE 37

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